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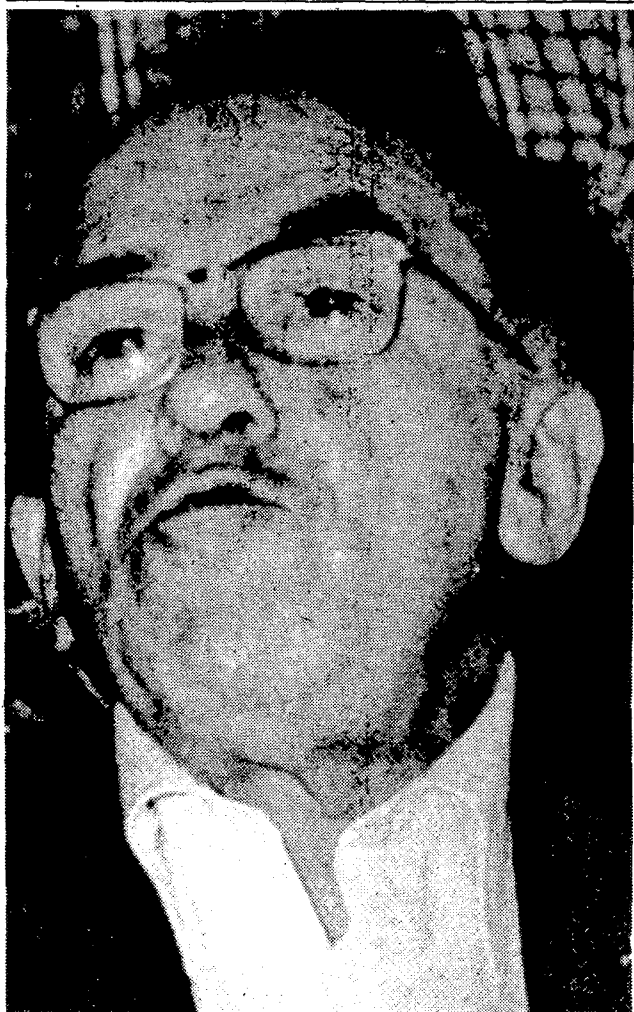
Jane Melnick

Santiago Carrillo speaks	2
Spanish Communist's views on Eurocommunism.	
UMW fights for life	3
Miners strike to save weakened union	
AFL-CIO Convention	5
No dissidents in evidence	
France in Africa	6
Neocolonialism is alive and well in former colonies	
Portugal government collapse	8
Mario Soares' problems as a captive of the IMF	

Barbara Kravitz

THE INSIDE STORY

JOHN JUDIS



Santiago Carrillo.

Santiago Carrillo of Spain's Communist party talks about Eurocommunism

In our last two issues we reported on the visit to the U.S. of Santiago Carrillo, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, and on the controversy that surrounded his crossing of a picket line of striking workers at Yale University. In his commentary in last week's *Inside Story*, Saul Wellman pointed out that these events had diverted attention from Carrillo's ideas and from the political perspective of Eurocommunism, which Carrillo came to this country to present to the American people. After publishing Wellman's statement, we realized that we, too, had ignored what Carrillo had to say.

This week, therefore, we are publishing a partial text of Carrillo's remarks at a seminar held by the Transnational Institute (a part of the Institute for Policy Studies) in Washington, D.C., in late November. The text begins with Carrillo speaking.

People are just beginning to talk about Eurocommunism, but Eurocommunism has had a long gestation—a gestation that began in countries like Italy, France and Spain in the period of the resistance against fascism, where the objective was democracy, for which we all fought. And side-by-side with democracy, we fought for independence. Between 1945 and 1947 the Communists, the Italian and French Communists left the governments in France and Italy and instead of rebelling or trying to violently block their expulsion from government, the Communists accepted the game and continued working within the structures of democratic freedoms. During all these years in the Western world, the Communists have developed within this framework.

Eurocommunism is first of all a political practice and, as it refers to Spain, concentrated on the struggle against the Franco dictatorship, and on national conciliation and democracy. The theoretical elaboration of this practice is recent and late in coming.

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At the same time that Communist parties in West Europe were practicing democracy, they had not abandoned certain ideological and traditional schemes. Only very recently have these schemes been criticized and subject to revision. In our struggle against fascism the Spanish Communists were concerned about developing democratic forms in the party. The Workers' Committees were a democratic grass roots movement in the factories. The citizens' movement, which is of great importance in Spain, is also a form of democracy at the level of the neighborhoods, with active participation by the citizenry. And, in all of our work in the struggle against fascism the goal has always been one of reestablishing freedom. Parallel to this has been the raising of consciousness of the values of democracy.

I do believe, of course, that there is a difference between Eurocommunism and Social Democracy. Before being a Social Democrat I would be a Maoist, Trotskyist, terrorist. Social democracy is a part of bourgeois political thinking. It administers very loyally to bourgeois society and does not intend to transform it. This does not mean that Socialist parties that sometimes take social democratic positions are not Socialist positions. For example, the Mitterand party in France. In my judgment, this is a Socialist party. It's not necessarily a Social Democratic party. The left wing of the Labor party in England is Socialist. I don't feel that I am that far away from Labour's socialist left or from the left of Mitterand's party.

The Soviet Union.

This process has as its point of departure the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, at which Khrushchev denounced the atrocities of the Stalinist period. This Congress provoked a great stir in the western Communist movement. From that time we stopped seeing the Soviet Union as our Mecca, and began to look at it in a new, critical spirit. This process was accentuated, at least for us Spaniards, by the invasion of Czechoslovakia. We had to start asking ourselves: What type of system is it that invades another country, that pursues practices characteristic of imperialism? We worried ourselves in search of an answer.

Naturally, Eurocommunism is not valid for all countries. When they ask me why the Vietnamese did not establish a Western-style democracy, I have to smile. When they criticize the system of Cuba, because it's not Eurocommunism, we cannot take that criticism very seriously. It is evident that Eurocommunism is a theory and a practice valid for developed countries of Europe and not for underdeveloped countries whose situations are completely different from those in Europe.

Eurocommunism is trying to establish the social hegemony of the forces of labor and culture in the countries of West Europe. This hegemony does not require any form of dictatorship. This can be a profoundly democratic hegemony that can allow the existence of all other philosophical schools of thought, or other political parties that accept democratic changes of power. We seek a regime independent from the Soviet Union that does not suggest the extension of the Soviet power in Europe. We do not want to be under American hegemony, and we certainly do not want to be under the hegemony of the Soviet Union. We want a form of socialism that adheres to the essence of the teachings of Marx and Engels.

The lessons of Chile.

TNI Director Saul Landau: *What lessons has the Spanish Communist party learned from the Chilean situation in terms of maintaining power, assuming that you're successful in the elections?*

Carrillo: European countries are more developed than Chile. And we do not conceive of our arrival in the government except through a large majority or, at

least, a majority of the vote. I would like to remind you that in Chile President Allende was elected with 36.4 percent of the overall electorate. That is, by a minority of the population. And Allende's party, the Unidad Popular, came to power due to specific characteristics of the Chilean constitution. The Allende government—and I don't, of course, need to repeat here the great admiration and respect that I have for him—found itself always in a weak position in Congress. We will get power only if we have a majority in the country, a majority with which we can govern effectively.

This does not remove, however, the danger of a subversive reaction from a section of society that cannot resign itself to losing its privileges; we think that if—in a majority government—there is an attempt by force from reactionary quarters, then one has to respond with force, and, of course, must be prepared for that moment. If a party didn't have a majority, it should step aside before the tensions reach the limits of democratic forms. I believe personally, at the risk of being wrong, that maybe the Chilean experience went farther, from the social and economic points of view, than what the real possibilities in Chile allowed at that time. That is, that perhaps it was too radical a process when one takes into account the relations of forces both in the country and internationally.

Working towards democracy.

The Communist party has been underground for 40 years in Spain, and a party that is underground is never democratic. This is true for the Communist party, the Socialist party, the Christian Democrats. When there is no freedom in the society, freedom cannot exist in the organization. They, in reality, cannot function democratically. Some of the parties that, incidentally, presume themselves to be very democratic in Spain, practically did not exist under the dictatorship. Thus, they have never had the need to restrict democratic forms in their organizations. But now we are entering a period of freedom and we are adapting our party and its internal functioning to the era of liberty.

Now we are preparing the Congress of the Spanish Communist party. There are theses that will be discussed by all of the party. The delegates to the Congress will be elected by secret ballot after the debate. And the new party leadership will be elected by secret ballot as well. One of the changes we are going to introduce in the new party statutes is the creation of a Tribunal of Guarantees, before which any party member can contest any decision of the government organization of the Workers' Committee if he or she thinks its positions go against the laws of the party. This Tribunal of Guarantees, will be independent of the party's Central Committee, and will be responsible only to the party Congress.

NATO.

In my judgment the United States won't lose anything with the simultaneous dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Competition in Europe would shift to different levels of ideology, economics, science, and culture—and the United States is better prepared than the Soviet Union to compete on this terrain. Politics of this sort would facilitate the independence of the countries of East Europe from the Soviet Union. And I believe it will also contribute to a democratization of the political system within the Soviet Union. If the U.S. wants independence and democratization in East Europe, this is the policy it should follow. The policy of military blocs helps to sustain authoritarian, closed regimes in the countries of East Europe. Of course at the same time the U.S. will have to give up its domination of West Europe and will have to resign itself to a much greater degree of West European independence. But I believe that this would not prejudice the international role of the U.S., not threaten its security. ■

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On strike for the union

By Dan Marshall
Staff Writer

When 180,000 coal miners embarked on a nationwide strike Dec. 6, the expiration date of their three-year contract, they carried with them the future of the United Mine Workers union.

Since its three-week strike in 1974, the UMW has been wracked by conflicts that have notably weakened its bargaining strength. These developments include internal splits within the reform administration of President Arnold Miller, a flood of wildcat strikes, a bitter election battle for top union offices and the complete breakdown of the grievance procedure in many areas.

Because of its weakened position, the union is ill equipped to fight the coal operators and their efforts to achieve unprecedented disciplinary powers over miners by holding hostage their health and welfare benefits.

The operators' strategy became clear last July when the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, the industry group bargaining with the UMW, forced a cut in health benefits affecting over 800,000 miners and their families. Observers believe that the BCOA is willing to return those benefits—at least on the surface—only in exchange for enhanced powers to quell wildcat strikes.

"The operators may succeed in getting a contract ratified using the carrot-on-the-stick principle," says a union insider in West Virginia. "There's a solid bloc of miners, especially those who are constantly riddled with medical bills, who will vote for any contract that gives a semblance of restoring pension and health benefits. They may vote for that and really be blackmailed into voting for the whole contract."

The BCOA is therefore taking "an extremely hard line" in the contract talks, *Business Week* recently reported. Indeed, union negotiators state that the operators refuse to even discuss a restoration of health benefits until the "wildcat issue" is resolved.

Industry stockpiles.

The strike will probably last from two to four months. Since it had long been anticipated, steel and utility companies—the major users of coal—have collected record stockpiles. Steel companies have doubled their usual reserve supplies of coal to about 90-days worth. Utilities have an average 100-day supply.

"The industry wants to bring those stockpiles back down," says an economist specializing in the coal industry. "Utilities now have more stockpiles than they can put on the ground. If the union hadn't struck, people probably would have begun being laid off because the companies wouldn't have any place to sell their coal. The strike is a way of regulating the industry by clearing the market of excess coal."

Some observers expect union members to reject the first contract regardless of its specifics. "It would be a miracle for the contract to be passed in southern Illinois on the first round," says Don Carson of UMW Local 2216. "This strike has been brewing for a long time. The coal operators have gotten the best of us for the last ten years. Now it's time they gave us a little back."

Union not as weak as reported.

Though the union is not in a strong bargaining position, its weaknesses have been overemphasized by the companies and the news media, pro-union sources contend. A recent ten-week wildcat has not severely hampered their ability to stay out, since it was focused in West Virginia, they say. Despite past splits, union members have apparently united behind Miller's leadership for the strike's duration.

Industry stockpiles are also not as impressive as they seem. The figures usually cited are average amounts. Specific utili-



Many miners fear that the future of their union is at stake in the current strike. The union is weaker than it has been in recent years and ill-equipped to fight operator efforts to reassert control. Above, miners force a non-union coal truck to empty its load in Eastern Kentucky.

ties probably have less on hand.

"When the industry makes the statement that they have 90 days without any problems, they're not telling the truth," says Jim Russell, an executive board member of UMW District 6 in Ohio. "They're talking about people who have facilities to store a lot of coal. Within 30 days plenty of places will be hurting. Then the operators will come to serious bargaining."

Meanwhile, UMW locals are attempting to stop all coal production by monitoring shipments, stopping trucks and picketing non-union mines. In Ohio, for instance, locals have reportedly halted shipments and production at the largest non-union facilities.

The union directly controls about 60 percent of the nation's coal output, and about 66 percent of the most efficient coal—that mined in the East, which has a higher heating value and a lower ash content than western varieties.

Grievances and the right to strike.

A variety of issues underlie the strike. A major one, according to Russell and other union sources, is the grievance procedure. The 1974 contract established a complex, five-step system that enables companies to avoid settling disputes at the mine site by pushing them all the way to arbitration, a process that can take years. About 6,000 grievances went to arbitration in the last three years, overwhelming the Arbitration Review Board, the final step in the procedure.

Miners also complain that many ARB decisions have thoroughly rewritten the last contract by setting precedents on what constitutes a legitimate grievance.

"The main cause of these wildcats is our grievance machinery," declares Russell. "That's why our people are so frustrated. The BCOA says that they're not going to negotiate anything unless they have peace in the coal fields. But people are never going to work until they have some means of protecting their individual rights."

Still another issue is the limited right to strike. The miners want a contract clause that would allow a local to walk out over a single issue by majority vote. Union negotiators believe that this would

help discourage unauthorized strikes. Industry representatives fear, however, that demands won at one mine would ripple through the entire industry.

Opinions differ on the importance and effectiveness of a right to strike provision. "The companies are just using it as a smokescreen," says Russell. "Nobody has said exactly what it means. If they do give it to us, it'll be written in such a way that we can't use it."

Others point out that if a local voted not to strike or to end a wildcat, a few miners could still throw up a picketline. "There's the problem of defining a picketline. Is it one guy who wants to do something on his own or is it the collective will of the local?" asks the coal industry economist.

Because it was mandated at the last union convention and restated at district meetings, Miller appeared committed to winning some sort of right to strike. When a petition was circulated in West Virginia calling for the demand to be dropped, Miller reportedly discouraged anyone from signing.

"The right to strike would be great, but nobody's sure of its effect," concludes Jim Hepe, an aide to outgoing UMW Secretary-Treasurer Harry Patrick. "It's a very weak issue in terms of support from the rank and file. They would give it up in a minute for more vacation time, sick-days, health benefits and more days off."

The BCOA has thus far adamantly rejected the limited right to strike. Instead they have proposed that any miner engaging in an unauthorized walkout be required to pay into the funds the amount lost by his absence. Observers believe that such a provision would ensure contract rejection by union members.

Restoring health benefits.

The overriding bargaining demand for most miners, however, appears to be full restoration of health care benefits. These benefits, which provided almost unlimited medical care, were slashed last July when the BCOA refused to reallocate money from one fund, with assets of \$300 million, to another fund in poor financial condition. (Employer contributions are determined on the tonnage of coal mined

and man-hours worked.)

The BCOA blames the funds' plight on wildcat strikes that drained \$108 million from them since 1974. A closer look, however, reveals that wildcats are a small part of the problem. In the last contract union and industry negotiators increased pension and other benefits, but apparently miscalculated whether income would match the new expenses. Companies have not opened as many new mines as anticipated, nor has the union organizing rate increased sufficiently. Floods and last year's harsh winter also cut coal production, decreasing employer contributions.

There are also no checks and balances on the funds. Thousands of ineligible persons have received medical cards, the *Wall Street Journal* discovered, and there is nothing to keep doctors from overcharging.

These problems have led many miners to suspect that the union has been fooled into a company plan to gradually weaken the funds. "The trouble in the funds has been coming for years," says Russell. "In 1974, instead of giving Miller all the money for the funds in tonnage, the companies convinced him to take some of it in man-hours. But the long-wall system of coal mining, which is relatively new, will cut the number of people needed for the same production by half in underground mines. Then, with half as many man-hours, where are the funds going to be?"

A week after the strike's outset, union and industry negotiators were still at the stage of throwing rhetoric back and forth, rather than approaching agreement on any of the central issues. The crunch will come in several months when utilities begin to run out of coal, steel mills begin to lay off workers, and miners' savings begin to run dry.

The conduct of the strike will be the first major test of the "new breed" of young miners who are considered more militant than their predecessors. "You can only squeeze a certain class of people so long before they unite," explains Russell. "Our people are torn apart now, but you watch how soon they get together. The companies may be playing right into our hands."

WOMEN

Congress makes abortion deal

By Mary Eisner Eccles
Congressional Quarterly

WASHINGTON—A bitter five-month struggle over the use of federal funds for abortion ended Dec. 7 when the House and Senate finally agreed on a compromise position.

The agreement enabled final passage of \$60.2 billion of fiscal 1978 appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health, Education and Welfare and related agencies. It came just in time to avert cuts in the mid-December paychecks of some 240,000 employees in the affected agencies.

The breakthrough came when the House voted 181-167 to partially loosen restrictions on payment of Medicaid money for abortions for low-income women in cases of rape, incest and severe physical illness.

The Senate, despite its long-standing preference for a more lenient policy, quickly approved the new wording by voice vote the same day.

Some attributed the abortion agreement as much to members' weariness, frustration and the desire to adjourn as to the actual wording of the final provision.

Provisions.

In their long search for compromise language on abortion, members of both houses agonized over practically every word and punctuation mark. While the House adamantly resisted major changes in an anti-abortion provision enacted in 1976, which permitted federal funding of abortions only in cases of danger to the life of the mother, the Senate wanted to make exceptions for women with other medical reasons for seeking abortions, as well as for victims of rape or incest.

Briefly, the final provisions:

- Prohibited the use of any funds in the bill to pay for abortions unless continued pregnancy would endanger the mother's life or, in the opinion of two doctors, cause the woman to suffer "severe and long-lasting physical health damage."

- Permitted funds for "medical procedures" to treat victims of rape or incest if the offenses have been promptly reported to police or to a public health agency.

- Permitted payments for birth control drugs or devices and for operations to terminate tubal pregnancies.

Though nearly all expressed some disappointment with the result, leading participants on both sides of the abortion issue acknowledged that much still depends on HEW's interpretation of the law.

"It's restrictive," Henry J. Hyde (R-IL), chief sponsor of the original House abortion amendment, said of the final version. "If honestly administered, it will cut down on elective abortions."

Advocates of a less restrictive provision, however, sought to clarify the compromise language differently. Prior to Senate approval Dec. 7, Edward W. Brooke (R-Mass) and Warren G. Magnuson (D-Wash) stressed permissive interpretations of both the rape/incest and health damage exceptions—which had posed major sticking points all along in the House.

When pressed on most of the same issues during House debate, supporters of the compromise tended to offer narrower explanations. Minority Whip Robert H. Michel (R-IL), for example, suggested a 30-day period for reporting and treating instances of rape or incest, limited the health exception to "a condition that was pre-existing at the time of pregnancy," and declined to include abortion within the scope of "medical procedures" permitted under either the rape/incest or health damage exceptions.

Concern over regulations.

Groups favoring maximum choice over abortion decisions were most concerned about the kind of regulations HEW would write.

According to Ellen Leitzer of the American Civil Liberties Union, the existence of contradictory statements from the two



Although right-to-life groups had reservations about the deal, they still considered it a two-thirds victory and vowed they would be back next year to win it all.

houses gave HEW Secretary Joseph A. Califano Jr., an outspoken opponent of abortion, an excuse to ignore much of the legislative history if he chose.

Beyond that, explained Leitzer, an attorney involved in a legal challenge to the fiscal 1977 anti-abortion provision, all of the debate on the new language—by spelling out each excepted circumstance—could produce a narrower court interpretation as well.

Pro-choice groups generally denounced the provision, claiming that all the compromising had been done by their side. "We've been losing sight of just how narrow this really is," said Carolyn Bode of the Women's Lobby, objecting to the ways Congress had chosen to qualify the exceptions for rape, incest and ill health.

The 20,000-member National Abor-

tion Rights Action League (NARAL) attacked the wording as "inhumane and quite possibly unconstitutional."

"It's not fair to ask a woman on Medicaid to understand all of the ramifications of this legislation," a NARAL spokesman added. She said she doubted many would promptly report rape or incest or would find two doctors to certify that their health was poor enough.

Still, opponents tended to see some improvement over the fiscal 1977 law. "At least it goes beyond the restrictive language of last year," said Marilyn D. Clancy, legislative chair of the National Women's Political Caucus.

"But it's really a poor way to legislate," added Clancy, who unsuccessfully challenged Hyde for Congress in 1976. "One of the main reasons we got a compromise

at all was the pressure to adjourn and their [the members'] desire to just get it over with."

Right-to-life groups also had reservations about the final provision. "It's maybe a two-thirds victory for us," said William Cox, executive director of the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment.

Hyde and his pro-life supporters vowed to continue to press for more restrictive language next year, on the Labor-HEW appropriations bill or other legislative vehicles. "The most important aspect of this entire thing is that the pro-life movement established itself as a major political force in this Congress," said Cox. "We'll come back much wiser and better prepared to get a narrower provision next year."

RELIGION

God is on the side of the poor.

By Juli Loesch
Delegates at the Third Inter-American Conference of Major Religious Superiors, representing 300,000 Catholic religious order members in the Western Hemisphere, met during the last week of November in Montreal to proclaim, "God is on the side of the poor."

The gathering of sisters, nuns, priests and brothers from Latin America, Canada and the U.S. marked a significant shift in religious life on the two continents toward a bold commitment to justice and liberation. Groups participating were the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, representing 165,000 religious sisters and nuns in the U.S.; the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, representing priests and brothers in the religious orders (Franciscans, Jesuits, etc.); the Confederacion Latino-Americana de Religiosos; and the Conference Religieuse Canadienne.

The meeting emphasized the solidarity between the North American leadership and the "liberation theologians" of Latin America, many of whom derive their economic and social analysis from Marx and other sources long considered incompatible with the Catholic church.

Dominican Father Jean-Marie Roger Tillard, Canadian spiritual writer, called on the religious of Latin America to "energetically challenge their North American brothers and sisters who are

sometimes so proud of a secularization which has often been nothing but a facile acceptance of a comfortable, mediocre lifestyle."

Throughout history the work of the religious orders has evolved to serve the needs of the church—and of society at large. According to Sister Joan Chittister, past president of the LCWR, for a long time the focus was to "defend the faith" from a society perceived as hostile, or to "preach the faith" to a society perceived as faithless. That the religious orders now see justice for the poor and oppressed as their primary work and goal marks, says Chittister, "a turning point which will have a tremendous impact on the immediate future of the religious in the three cultures."

In Argentina, Nicaragua, Chile and other Latin American countries, the rift between the Catholic church and the ruling cliques has become so pronounced that thousands of church workers associated with Maryknoll, the Franciscan order, and other religious societies have been imprisoned, expelled or assassinated by government-sponsored terrorist squads. Catholic teachers associated with the poor are kept under surveillance; Catholic radio programs and newspapers have been closed down for "subversion" (which usually means voicing the concerns of the unemployed, the hungry, the Indians and campesinos).

The religious in North America face another challenge: not repression, but marginalization. In the U.S. Catholic sisters and priests have long been involved in traditional social service institutions: they run thousands of schools, hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, and so on. The Canadian delegation cautioned their American religious colleagues to foresee what would happen if all these works were taken over by the government by a wide development of the welfare state—as has been done in Canada in the last 20 years. In this case religious life would be "marginalized" unless it were ready to transform itself through a radical new view of its mission.

According to Sister Mary Daniel Turner, conference coordinator, the week-long discussion of this "radical new view" brought "deep interaction between men and women, North and South, dreamers and pragmatists."

Canadian and Latin American speakers called for a unified program to challenge "the social, economic, and political factors which undergird poverty," while the American delegates pledged to mobilize their hundreds of thousands of constituents toward a more "prophetic" critical view of the structures of injustice in the U.S.

Juli Loesch is a member of PAX, a Christian center for non-violence in Erie, Pa.

LABOR

A well orchestrated convention

By Sam Kushner

LOS ANGELES—There were no dissidents on the floor of the 12th Biennial Convention of the AFL-CIO. It was a "well orchestrated" meeting, in the words of one delegate. Those who had differences kept them to themselves or just talked about them in the corridors.

Those who looked for winds—or even slight breezes—of change in the hierarchy of the AFL-CIO, from which most of the 277 convention delegates came, had cause to be bitterly disappointed. The apparent unanimity behind AFL-CIO President George Meany lasted throughout the three and a half day convention.

One seventh of the convention time, an entire morning session, was devoted to attacks on the Soviet Union. Vladimir Bukovsky, a Soviet dissident touring the country as an AFL-CIO guest, made a major address.

He was followed by AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Lane Kirkland, Meany's likely successor, who described how the federation had put the Soviets on the spot by inviting prominent dissidents to address the convention. None were given visas by the Soviet authorities.

(By comparison, discussion of repression in South Africa was relegated to an amendment to an omnibus resolution on world affairs, considered in the closing hours of the convention. South African unions had three fraternal delegates at the meeting.)

While the convention was generous in the time allotted to Soviet dissidence, it was stingy with other things, even the reelection of Meany and Kirkland. The election took about a half hour, most of which was devoted to flowery speeches in praise of the 83-year-old Meany.

The president was voted a \$20,000 annual salary (to \$110,000) and Kirkland had his salary upped to \$90,000 (from \$60,000). Meanwhile, dues were raised for the federation's 13.7 million members, who will have to pay 15 cents per capita as compared to 13 cents now.

The increase was necessary, officials said, to compensate for an expected loss of \$500,000 in the last six months of this year and because the federation has lost half a million members since its last meeting.

Not everyone was pleased.

Not all delegates were pleased with the proceedings, despite the lack of protest from the convention floor. In several interviews with *IN THESE TIMES*, delegates spoke of their disagreements with Meany.

One of the most outspoken was District 51 Steelworkers union director Jim Balanoff, whose 110,000-member district is larger than some of the international unions represented at the convention. Balanoff, a leader of Steelworkers Fight Back, succeeded Ed Sadowski as the district director for the Chicago-Gary area. The 55-year-old maverick was so disgusted with the proceedings that he left after the second day. "I have work to do back home," he said.

"I am really disappointed in this convention," he told in *THESE TIMES*. "There are no people here from the local unions. The convention is made up, in the main, of officers of internationals. I am the exception to the rule. I don't see too much being done... They could have sent us the minutes in the mail."

Speaking of Meany's raise, he said, "That's ridiculous. Labor already has a bad image. This furthers it. I don't see the rhyme or reason for it. He sure doesn't need it."

Black sheep Winpisinger.

The black sheep of the convention was William Winpisinger, president of the million-member International Association of Machinists. He talked volubly to the media about Meany's bad "image" and the need to replace him at the head of the federation.

Some thought he would be punished



Photos by Bob Gumpert

Foreign policy concerns dominated the AFL-CIO convention and although there was private grumbling about George Meany, no one spoke up on the floor.



Above, William Winpisinger being congratulated on his election to the AFL-CIO's Executive Council. Below, a delegate in a common position at the convention.

for his outspokenness by not being elected to the 33-member Executive Council, but he was elected. He was also one of about 40 delegates who sat in their seats when Meany was "unanimously" re-elected.

On the federation's foreign policy positions, Winpisinger said, "I don't see a great deal of change. That is one thing I disagree with [Meany] a little bit, but I am not going to start a war over it." He did tell of meeting the head of the French Metal Workers union, a Communist, in New York and shaking hands with him. "My hand hasn't rotted off yet," he said, pointing out that his union had "some community of interest" with the French union. Contact with communists is frowned upon by Meany.

Charles Hayes, vice president of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters union and a leading official of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, noted that there were probably less than 20 black delegates at the convention. He believes that there should be at least 80, which would be

comparable to the black membership in the federation, estimated at 10-12 percent.

"We are really underrepresented here. That has been a problem of long standing and still is. We in the CBTU are seeking to get more blacks at the policy-making level. The CBTU has not been as effective as it should be, but we will be."

"I would have liked to see more time at the convention devoted to domestic policies," he added. "Here we have the whole economic situation. What are we going to do about it?... The Carter administration's program is inadequate. But just to talk about it is not enough. I don't think we have enough of a program to guarantee that the government is going to guarantee a decent way of life for people who are now out of work and are being written off as far as our economy in America is concerned."

Politics is evidence.

Politics was very much on the minds of many delegates. Meany resented the fact that President Carter had turned down

an invitation to address the convention. When Carter sought permission to speak to the assembled delegates by phone, reliable sources report that he got no positive response from Meany. AFL-CIO spokesmen, however, denied that any such exchange took place.

(After the convention, Carter invited Meany to visit the White House and personally receive presidential congratulations on his reelection.)

The White House was also concerned that a possible competitor to Carter, California Gov. Jerry Brown, was well received by convention delegates. Delivering a speech tailored to win over his audience, Brown got standing ovations before and after he spoke.

Citing the defeat of common site picketing legislation earlier this year, building trades leaders and others, including Meany, served notice on Democratic members of Congress that they can no longer expect labor support if they fail to go down the line with the AFL-CIO program.

Winpisinger, however, voiced concern that the federation's all-out advocacy of self interest legislation would buttress the image of labor as grasping and selfish.

There was not a single controversial debate on the convention floor. Most resolutions were adopted unanimously.

Vernon Jordon dropped the only controversial paragraph of his prepared speech when he delivered it. A fight on the issues affecting black people, he said in his prepared text, "are preconditions for an alliance of mutual cooperation not seen since the early '60s."

Jordon did emphasize, however, that passage and implementation of the Humphrey-Hawkins bill, which got considerable mention at the convention, would still leave black unemployment at 15 percent in 1983.

One of the more dramatic moments of the convention was the appearance of top Israeli and Egyptian labor officials with their arms joined. Both spoke briefly amid cheers from the delegates.

The overwhelming emphasis was on foreign policy at the convention; but in his short acceptance speech Meany did single out a few domestic matters as priorities for the next two years. Included were labor law reform, which received strong emphasis during the proceedings, the boycott of the J.P. Stevens Company, and legislation to protect domestic jobs from foreign competition.

Sam Kushner is a reporter for KPFK radio in Los Angeles and the author of *Long Road to Delano*.

FRANCE IN AFRICA

France still controls its former colonies

France's former holdings in Africa are little more than private reserves for big French companies.

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND—Who is Louis de Guiringaud and why has he been jetting around Africa lately? The "who" is easy enough. De Guiringaud is the current French foreign minister and an old Africa hand; he began his diplomatic career as ambassador to Ghana in the 1950s. The "why" is more complicated. Officially, the Giscard d'Estaing government says that de Guiringaud's scheduled shuttle from the Ivory Coast to Ghana, Cameroon, Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya, Mozambique and back to Nigeria was intended to open a "political dialogue" with "all the states of the Dark Continent (sic), regardless of who they are, English- or Portuguese-speaking, moderate or radical."

The "dialogue" was cut short in Tanzania in late August. Student protests against France's substantial aid to South Africa, and the Nyerere government's refusal to disavow them, so upset de Guiringaud that he returned to Paris without completing his African junket. Subsequently, the French government announced plans to cut off all military assistance to Pretoria. The pretext: evidence that the South Africans are using technology bought from France to build an atom bomb. These developments reveal much about the real nature of France's traditional role in black Africa as well as the "new" departure launched by de Guiringaud's mission.

Recent events in southern Africa, where Britain and the U.S. occupy the limelight, have unfortunately obscured France's equally important role as a foreign guarantor of "stability" in black Africa. Some observers might have been startled when Paris emerged as the main back-stop for the tottering Zaire government last spring. It was French military aircraft that flew Moroccan soldiers to Shaba province to spell Mobutu's routed troops, and it was French money and logistical support that kept the "allied" forces in the field against the Katangese gendarmes.

France has been playing this role in black Africa for several years, especially in the equatorial region where most of its ex-colonies are located. Of all the former imperial powers, the French have kept the tightest economic rein on their onetime African possessions and have been the most brazen in intervening to maintain their grip [Up to 1971, some 10-15,000 French regulars were stationed in Africa, with an equal number of France's elite *Force d'Intervention* on alert back home, ready to wade in if needed. These troops were used to bolster pliant regimes in Cameroon (1959-64), Senegal (1959-60), the Ivory Coast (1963) and Gabon (1964-66).]

Whereas France's main African preoccupation has been to keep the lid on in its ex-colonies, recent governments in Paris have not shirked in helping to keep "order" outside their own direct sphere of influence. Such actions have been viewed as a normal means of protecting these former domains from "contamination." Thus, Paris has been quick to sell arms to white minority regimes in southern Africa: the helicopters used to hunt ZIPA guerillas in Zimbabwe and SWAPO rebels in Namibia are French-made Alouettes and Pumas.

France also played a notable but little-publicized part in the effort to stop the MPLA from assuming power in Angola.

Through Zaire, agents of the SDECE (France's CIA) funneled money and arms to the FNLA in Angola proper and, particularly to its offshoot in oil-rich Cabinda. This operation is said to have been directed by the notorious Jacques Foccart, who, during the De Gaulle/Pompidou years, ran France's counter-insurgency program in black Africa and masterminded the elimination of key African revolutionaries.

Ties that bind.

Foccart and his successors are not idle intriguers. Should black Africa move left, French interests would suffer more than those of the other neo-colonial powers. France's budding atomic power grid and nuclear arsenal depend heavily on uranium supplies from Gabon and Zaire. Its efforts to keep conventional fuel bills low are aided considerably by its monopoly over oil production in Gabon. France's access to cheap petroleum and natural gas from Algeria is the key to its energy policy.

Beyond these strategic considerations, however, there is the more prosaic matter of buying and selling. Trade between France and its former African dependencies is substantial and highly favorable to French exporters: in 1969, 50 percent of overseas purchases by ex-French colonies in Africa (mostly consumer goods) came from France; conversely, shipments from these same nations (mainly basic commodities) comprised 37 percent of French imports in that year. More important, while France guarantees African suppliers above-average returns for their raw materials and agricultural products, its own exports to the region sell for from 23 to 105 percent above world market prices, thus easily wiping out any gains to the African producers.

In addition, the economies of most of France's former holdings in black Africa are little more than private reserves for the big French companies. Originally, the top money was made in the plantation sector, for instance, by the Cacao Barry Group, the world's leading producer of cocoa butter, which exercises a monopoly over cocoa production and processing in Cameroon and the Ivory Coast. More recently, attention shifted to the extractive industries: bauxite in Guinea, oil and uranium in Gabon. Now, however, the swing is increasingly toward manufacturing, as French firms set up shop in Africa to get away from high wages and militant unions at home. Major targets have been the booming textile industry in the Ivory Coast and wood processing in Cameroon, Gabon, the Ivory Coast and Togo.

France's virtual right of eminent domain over these ex-colonies is enshrined in a series of "cooperation agreements" signed in 1959, when French-speaking black Africa became "independent." These "agreements" stipulate that all African signatories must remain within the franc zone. While this deal won quick external recognition of their monies, the new states have paid a heavy price for sticking with the franc. For one thing, they have had to swallow the export of French inflation into their economies and to accept the automatic devaluation or realignment of their currencies whenever Paris takes such steps. Worse, they are obliged to convert all foreign earnings into French francs and deposit them in the French treasury, to be used by the French government as it sees



A Moroccan troop in Zaire, equipped by France.

fit. It has been alleged that, on at least one occasion, these African funds served to keep France's balance of payments out of the red.

France's aid program for Africa also helps hold its ex-domains in check. Paris, of course, scoffs at this charge, portraying its assistance as an unparalleled act of generosity. Official statistics appear to support this claim: over recent years, French aid to its former African holdings alone averaged 1 percent of the country's annual GNP, a figure well above the total yearly U.S. foreign aid bill (the Netherlands and Sweden are the only states, aside from France, whose aid outlays per annum have ever reached the UN's recommended target of 1 percent of annual GNP).

However, the closer one gets to the French aid package for Africa, the more it smells. First, nearly 50 percent of the yearly total is spent on the salaries of the ubiquitous French civil servants and technicians working in the recipient countries. Another hefty chunk goes to finance imports of high-priced French consumer goods. Budgeting procedures also help to inflate the annual figure: some defense expenditures are lumped into the aid totals and, until recently, assistance to France's remaining colonies (the Comoros, Djibouti and Reunion, "independent" as of this year) was also included.

Furthermore, French aid totals have been slipping lately. Assistance to Africa currently equals only 0.7 percent of France's annual GNP and its share of the French budget has dropped from 5 percent to 3 percent. More importantly, the public component of the aid package is down from 66 percent to 54 percent, with the slack being taken up by export credits and private investment. This trend has been visible for some time: as long ago as 1970, some 50 percent of the credits of the government's Central Fund for Economic Development (Caisse Centrale de la Cooperation Economique) was be-

ing paid out to eight of France's leading multinational firms.

African mouthpieces.

This cozy relationship appeared to be in danger when Angola fell to the MPLA in 1976. After years of poking fun at Dean Rusk over Vietnam, domino theories suddenly came into vogue in Paris: Zaire, it was said, would be the first to face subversion from Luanda, then the Ivory Coast and Senegal. It was this near paranoia that sparked French assistance to Mobutu this spring and launched de Guiringaud's abortive shuttle through Africa. And, it was largely fear of embarrassing its client states in black Africa that provoked the Giscard d'Estaing government's abrupt decision to forsake Vorster.

De Guiringaud is likely to be back in Africa once the Tanzanian flap blows over. And, he will return with the blessing of the American government. For Washington has not been fooled by the ballyhoo emanating from the Elysee Palace about how France is offering Africa a "third way" between American capitalism and Soviet Marxism. As the Paris-based *International Herald Tribune* modestly put it on Aug. 2, 1977: "So far at least, French African policy is not seen as competitive with those of the U.S. or Britain, but rather complementary."

All of this could go down the drain if the left coalition comes to power in France next year. In that event, French policy toward its ex-colonies in black Africa would change drastically, to the detriment of the conservative regimes now in place there. Further, official tolerance of white minority rule in southern Africa would end.

These possibilities, however, lie in a problematic future. For the moment, one has to agree with the unnamed U.S. diplomat quoted, once again, in the Aug. 2 number of the *International Herald Tribune*: France, he opined, is now "our best ally outside of Europe."



Workers at a Saab plant in Sweden.

NORTHERN EUROPE

Workplace democracy aboard ship

Radical reorganization of work and authority has succeeded in fertilizer plants, hydroelectric stations, offices and even auto factories. Now it's being tried at sea.

By David Moberg

Even without a Captain Bligh on the fore-castle, or a crew of *Potemkin* sailors berthed below, the ocean-going ship has an ancient and well-deserved reputation as a workplace of rigid, hierarchical authority.

Democratize such a workplace? It would seem unlikely. Yet it is precisely what is happening on ten experimental ships in the commercial fleet of Norway. The project started in the late '60s with the assistance of Einar Thorsrud, one of the leading proponents of the efforts at work redesign and democracy that have flourished recently in Scandinavia. "If it is possible in a ship, then it should be possible in most workplaces," Thorsrud argues.

Radical reorganization of work and authority has succeeded in fertilizer plants, hydroelectric plants, offices and even auto factories. There, Thorsrud says, "they have broken the myth of the assembly line" by proving that cars can be assembled with no overall increase in costs but with significant increases in worker control and far more pleasant working conditions.

Although limited in number, the experiments demonstrate that workers can govern themselves on the job, that they enjoy their work far more and do far better when they control their own work lives, and that rigid bureaucracy is not only technically unnecessary but also counterproductive.

Deep social and political issues remain, however, which only further experience can resolve. Will managers surrender the power they now jealously guard? How far can such worker democracy go within the firm? Do these experiments point toward socialism or simply represent a new form of labor-management collaboration that strengthens a reformed capitalism and mutes workers' militancy?

Bureaucracy uprooted.

Rising problems of recruiting workers to some jobs, of absenteeism and turnover, and of strikes and "labor discipline" in the full-employment economy of the late '60s spurred the Scandinavian experiments. Managers had to do something to

make their workplaces more attractive.

On the good ship *Balao*, for example, the traditional hierarchy was replaced with work planning groups. The newly integrated work crews required increased education and mechanical training for many of the lower level sailors. They learned how to navigate as well as to repair the ship, so they could work in nearly all areas. The old bosun, or supervisor, was eliminated in favor of the new job category of ship mechanic.

Safety hazards were continually discussed in work planning groups, with the ship's crew completely in charge of designing all operations to maintain safety. Everyone was put on a fixed annual wage and a flexible work schedule for staffing the ship was established. There was continual retraining on board and on shore to broaden the skills of everyone. The ten ships share a worker-published newspaper.

The key to the whole experiment's success was "for those who do the things to have the initiative and control," Thorsrud said, "to put back into the job coordination and control." Now the captain on the ship is frequently overruled. There is no uniform relationship of superiors to subordinates, but an adjustment of rules according to each task. The four separate eating areas have been combined into one, and no one even sits regularly in the same chair. This uprooting of bureaucracy has increased the satisfaction and power of the crew. The ship owners now find it easier to recruit and hold workers. At every point the union has cooperated with the venture.

Recent changes in both Swedish and Norwegian laws could spread these innovations beyond the present isolated cases, despite new political obstacles emerging in the past year. In both countries new laws guarantee worker or public representatives on corporate boards. There are other proposals, currently sidetracked, for a systematic transfer of stock to the unions. Other laws have had a more direct impact on the workplace. For example, now Norwegian managers are legally required to plan for meaningfulness of work and the right to learn in their plants and can be hauled into court and penalized if they don't consult with workers before changing the workplace. In Sweden, a law passed last year guarantees unions the right to negotiate any and all aspects of managerial decision-making. There are no unqualified managerial prerogatives. Except in the case of wages, the union's view in any dispute is considered valid pending appeal through labor courts. That is precisely the opposite of the situation in the U.S., where management is presumed right until proven otherwise.

What concerns Thorsrud most, however, is breaking down the bureaucratic iron cage and returning creativity and

thinking to the workers themselves. In his recent visit to the U.S., I talked with Thorsrud about these experiments in industrial democracy.

Are these work changes designed to bring workers and management closer together, or is there the possibility that they could bring greater conflict to the workplace?

There is a common misunderstanding that what we have been doing in redesigning the work place and changing work organization is part of what sociologists call a harmony theory. In fact, it often comes down to very concrete conflicts. For instance, the purchasing system by means of which materials are bought and brought into the factory is supposed to belong to the managerial prerogative. In these experiments both workers and management start arguing about optimal ways of delivering materials. Or simply the priority of investments.

Also, it soon comes to payment, especially if the productivity goes up, as it happens in nearly all the cases. Then it's very tough bargaining. Some projects have in fact been stopped because they couldn't agree on how to share the outcome.

They have also abandoned it in some cases because the productivity increase was so great that they couldn't handle it as part of a system. Others would look over the fence and say, "Look, they're turning out the product the same as before, but they have increased their productivity 25 percent and their salary will have to go up 25 percent, too. This is unfair to the rest of the people in the plant."

Also, there are some companies that have certainly realized after a year or two of this that it really demanded giving away power to an extent they hadn't expected. Then, in large corporations, it is very easy to kill this by putting in a different manager. They could kill the project, but in those cases they've often found that after termination, they had a terrible uphill struggle, because the workers will fight back and hold back labor.

When a worker in the U.S. hears that methods had not been changed and output increased by 25 percent, his first thought would be speed-up.

There is no case that I know of where they have tried to increase the productivity by something like 25 percent by speed-up. It is by a completely different type of coordination and planning. It's not a matter of working harder. It's a matter of putting thinking back into work so that people can use their heads. That is the real increase. It is a question of adaptability to change to the outside, and there the concept of productivity is irrelevant in many cases. It is much more a question of being able to produce something else quickly and well, being able to change the quality and know what you're

doing, and still be able to coordinate the necessary input of materials. The point is to bring back integration and coordination to where it belongs, directly where the work is being done.

Has the traditional managerial prerogative to hire and fire been modified?

Oh, yes, definitely. You can't have a high degree of autonomy in a group unless the group has the right to hire and fire. Legally the company has the right but they are careful not to interfere. For example, on the ship they leave it to the crew to find their own volunteers. In some cases the work group has to fire because some people are unwilling to play the game and are not socially responsible. They may give them a chance to change, but after a while, authority is exercised by the group.

We've seen numerous examples where groups have "carried" people who may be alcoholics or who are neurotics and can't handle a stressful situation. And they carry older people, for example, by giving them a job very early in the morning, which the young boys hate but the older people are always there. And speaking of hiring and firing, there are quite a number of cases in Scandinavia where management wants the workers to have a final say in choosing their own supervisors. They are tough. They select the new type foreman who has technical competence, can be a good teacher and can handle relationships between departments, not the ones who come down and tell everybody what to do.

Volvo breaks assembly line myth.

By far the most famous of the Scandinavian experiments to people in this country is the Volvo plant, where the assembly line has been replaced by individual trolleys carrying the cars to be assembled. What is your evaluation of that?

First, it is obvious that they have broken the myth of the assembly line. They have built a completely new technical structure. Secondly, it is a nice place to work—noise, cleanliness, light, all that is taken care of. It's not much more expensive than a dirty, filthy, dark place. The extra costs are something like 10 percent for the building. The trolleys might add another 5 percent to the total investment. But only two years after, they claim to have regained most of that extra investment. Thirdly, there is more training and learning going on than before, because of the rotation of jobs. Fourthly, they are more involved in quality control.

But the system is not really utilized as much as it could be in terms of changing the work planning. At Kalmar that is still part of a huge, centralized, computerized planning system. Until they work away from that, the independence and autonomy of the groups are not high. They

Continued on page 20.

PORTUGAL

Soares: a captive of the IMF

Wide World

Since the April 25, 1974, revolution, Portugal is a free country. Its freely elected government is free to do whatever it chooses... so long as it strictly conforms to the dictates of the International Monetary Fund. The catch, which in one country after another is putting an end to the democracy and human rights of which those nice people in Washington are so fond, is that IMF requirements tend to impose policies that no party would dare advocate in an election.

The only way to accept IMF conditions and still hold elections is to get all important political parties to back the unpopular austerity measures. Then disgruntled voters have no choice. Inability to get Portugal's other parties to share responsibility for economic policies demanded by the IMF in return for approving credits totalling \$800 million caused the minority Socialist government of Mario Soares to lose a vote of confidence and fall from power on Dec. 8.

Up until the final vote, which in typical Portuguese fashion took place at six o'clock in the morning after an exhausting all-night session, there was speculation that the Portuguese Communist party (PCP) might come to Soares' rescue by casting its 40 votes along with the Socialists' 102. It probably wanted to. Such a vote could have seemed a step out of the ghetto to which Alvaro Cunhal's party has been relegated by Soares' anti-Communist crusade over the past couple of years and into the left-wing coalition it has been yearning for. On the eve of the vote, Communist Carlos Brito called for "understanding and cooperation between the only two democratic parties to emerge from the resistance to fascism." As Soares had recently taken to warning that "the real danger comes from the right," Socialists actually joined Communists in applauding Brito's speech.

No concessions.

But there is reason to doubt that Soares wanted to owe his salvation to the Communists. In his 3:00 a.m. speech before the vote of no confidence, Soares attacked the right, but made none of the concessions to the Communist party that it obviously needed to justify voting confidence in a government that has been consistently anti-Communist and anti-working class.

For days before the vote, Lisbon was flooded with "leaks" disclosing that Soares' strategy was to let the Communists save him before making a sharp turn to the right. Had Soares wanted to go down while casting responsibility to the right and to the left, he needed have acted no differently. And indeed, some Socialists are convinced that to save their political fortunes, they must stop taking responsibility for necessarily unpopular government measures.

For the moment at least, Soares' balancing act between right and left seems to have failed. In succeeding so well in isolating the PCP, he has weakened his capacity to stand up to the increasingly rambunctious right. He has opened the way to a rightwing comeback that some fear could be fatal not only to his party but to Portugal's young democracy.

Soares' anti-Communism was perhaps inspired as much by his need to impress rich investor countries (West Germany and the U.S.) and to build his own party as by the PCP's real faults. The PCP's gravest error was to try, after the April revolution, to take over the state apparatus, for all the world as if it were in an Eastern European country occupied by the Red Army. But Portugal is a country on the western tip of Europe whose military revolutionaries were influenced, not by the Soviet Union, but by Third World liberation struggle romanticism as a result of their mishaps in Portugal's rebellious African colonies.

The PCP never had a serious chance of taking power. But it acted as if it were trying, thus feeding a "red scare" that



Socialist Premier Mario Soares in Parliament just before losing a vote of confidence that forced his government out of office.

Soares was able to use to recruit nervous civil servants to his own skeletal party in a counter-effort to take over the administration.

Unlike other Socialist parties, which are the heirs to a long experience in the labor movement, the PSP was founded in 1973 in West Germany by Soares and a few fellow exiles. After April 1974, it picked up a labor base among some militants with anarchist or far left leanings, antagonistic to the PCP's hold on the organized union movement. This labor base was never very well coordinated with the PSP leadership, and much of it has reportedly either been demoralized by Soares' policies or else gone with the "Workers Fraternity" group that former Agriculture Minister Antonio Lopes Cardoso recently led out of the party.

Dwindling support.

The dynamic new middle class Soares was evidently counting on to carry forward his middle course has not burst on to the scene. The workers who were the most enthusiastic supporters of the anti-fascist revolution, have been largely discouraged and demobilized. Concessions to the right, instead of achieving a friendly "centrist" consensus, have only encouraged rightwing politicians like PSD leader Francisco Sa Carneiro to demand more—specifically, revision of the Constitution.

With a shaky social base, Soares' policy has been to try to please the sources of foreign investment capital. Transparent docility regarding foreign interests has made his social base still shakier.

Despite their names, the Social Democratic party (PSD), with 73 seats, and the Social and Democratic Center (CDS), with 41, are rightwing parties. They represent people who were basically satisfied under a police state and would not be heartbroken to go back to one to protect their privileges. The unusually reactionary Portuguese Catholic church helps to cement the rightwing alliance between the selfish rich and the pessimistic poor in the north.

Ignoring Soares' entreaties, the right has been exploiting anti-IMF feeling among small businessmen who fear they

will be ruined by the forced recession demanded by IMF experts.

Alone, the Socialists would appear incapable of carrying through the austerity measures demanded by the IMF. The government lacks competence and authority. It has apparently been unable, so far, to carry through the Barreto agrarian reform law provisions for returning a certain amount of collectivized land to private landlords. Previous devaluations of the escudo have failed to produce promised economic benefits.

Do the "politically neutral, purely technical" experts of the IMF know what they are doing? Some people think they know so well that their demands are mere pretexts to force countries like Portugal to adopt authoritarian governments.

Unemployment in Portugal is 16 percent. The situation has been made worse by the return of 600,000 settlers from Angola and Mozambique and a drastic drop in emigration as a result of recession in other countries (only 9,000 Portuguese emigrated in 1975 compared to 64,000 in 1973). The IMF conditions—reduction by a third in the balance of payments deficit, reduction of the annual growth rate from 7 percent to 3 percent, a wage increase rate (20 percent for 1978) below inflation (to be brought from 34 percent to 30 percent)—mean that a "free" government is not allowed to do anything about massive unemployment. The "health" of the currency takes precedence over the people.

The right.

Some observers believe the right neither has nor needs a consistent economic policy of its own. It is content to let first Soares, then the President, Gen. Ramalho Eanes, compromise themselves by advocating IMF-dictated policies they are too weak to carry out. According to this theory, the deepening chaos will eventually force a return to authoritarian rule. The right has an interest in showing that Portugal is ungovernable under the present constitution, which reflects the populist and socialistic sympathies of the Armed Forces Movement that made the revolution. Once the revolutionary gains are undone, then the IMF could be

satisfied.

The current mess seems to favor the right, simply because the Portuguese left has most recently demonstrated its own incapacity to get things together. But there is no proof that the right could pull off a seizure of power.

The Portuguese Armed Forces, although "normalized" under Eanes' leadership after Nov. 25, 1975, still have their special traits. The bloodletting of their unhappy experiences in Africa have left a strong reluctance to play cop on behalf of some distant, probably foreign, oligarchy. The left in the Armed Forces has been through purges and is on the defensive, but it has a conspiratorial and revolutionary experience missing in other military establishments.

In his speech to the parliament last October 15, the usually taciturn President came out as a firm defender of the Constitution. This made him, as well as Soares, a target of the right. However, within the armed forces, it also seems to have marked a rapprochement between Eanes' moderates and part of the left they defeated and purged two years ago—specifically, that part associated with the architect of the "red carnation" revolution, Otelo Carvalho.

The "Otelists" are perhaps most fed up with the ravages wrought to "their" revolution by the political parties, both PCP and PSP, as well as by the far-left sects, whose unrestrained "Leninism" has throttled most attempts at grassroots organizing (dear to the hearts of the "Otelists") by their determination to take over every group and endow it with the "correct line." For the moment, what can the military left hope for other than to defend the Constitution?

By coming forward as champion of the Constitution, Gen. Eanes may be able to rally the "Otelists" in the armed forces and much of the technocracy to his own "party above parties." If he does no better than Soares going down the middle of the road, he could lead a last stand before the upsurge of the right. If he succeeds, Gen. Eanes may solve the dilemma by rallying a worried left to a more conservative and authoritarian, but constitutional, Presidential regime. ■

FENCED IN



SPECIAL 8-PAGE PULLOUT

The Strike

A crisis for the family farm. Page 10.

Southern Farms

Agribusiness squeezes small farmers. Page 12.

Farm women

New challenges for a new breed. Page 14.

Rural America

Third National Conference meets. Page 16.

Above: "He was a working man" by Bob Fitch. Photographic contributors to this section are Jon Jacobs (p. 10, top), Meg Gerkin (p. 10, bottom, p. 14, bottom), Jane Melnick (p. 12, 17), Bob Fitch (p. 13), Dorothea Lange (p. 14, top).

FENCED IN BY GROWING FINANCIAL AND MARKETING pressures the American family farmer is in crisis. In the past decade we have lost more than one-fourth of our farms, over 3 million since 1945. Most of these have been small, single-family operations, the family farm of American legend.

Economics lies behind this crisis. Since 1952 prices paid farmers for crops have increased by 6 percent while costs of production have risen 122 percent. But behind the figures lies another story, the rise of agribusiness and the increased monopolization of markets and supplies.

As this issue is being prepared, farmers across the nation—in a largely spontaneous and uncoordinated movement—are responding in a farmers' "strike." It is too early to tell what success they will have. Their actions have focused renewed attention on the direction and future of American agriculture. There is little to indicate, however, that they will bring about any significant change in the corporate policies that dominate American agriculture.

This special section is intended as a first step in defining the crisis in agriculture. There is much more that needs to be said—in particular regarding the specific role of agribusiness in creating the present crisis. We expect to return to the subject in future issues.



"A father can't set his sons up in farming the way mine did 20 years ago. The land's not available, or when it is, the only ones who can afford it are the doctors, dentists and businessmen. That shouldn't have been allowed to happen."

We gotta do something; it's no good now.

By Nancy Ann James

RAYMOND, MINN. — RUSSELL ONNEN paid the equivalent of 50 bushels of corn for a pair of shoes recently, and he doesn't think that's a fair exchange.

It was high-moisture, \$1-a-bushel corn. Dried corn would have brought \$1.30 to \$1.50. Even so, Onnen pointed out, "Twenty years ago [when he started his own farm] we sued to get \$1.50 for a bushel of corn. Grain was the same as now; oats, 90 cents a bushel. And the price I get for milk is very close to the same as I got then."

Meanwhile, as everyone knows, other prices have soared drastically. What do the Onnens have to buy that costs so much more now? Mrs. Marcia Onnen started ticking off "fertilizer, herbicides, commercial feed, seed corn (\$70 a bushel!), machinery, repairs, insurance, medical bills, taxes..."

"Most farmers do as much of their own equipment repair as they can," she pointed out. "You've got to—the price to fix it costs more than the thing is worth. But some of it you just can't do, like overhaul an engine. So you have to pay the repairman \$10 an hour."

That's a sore point because farmers claim their own labor is never compensated. "If a farmer were to put a price on his hours, you couldn't afford his products," said Onnen, whose weather-lined face looked older than his 43 years.

Several other issues surfaced as the Onnens discussed their year-in/year-out struggle to make ends meet on a small (160-acre) central Minnesota dairy farm. (They rent another 70 acres and milk 50 cows, a large herd in these parts.)

The price of farm land keeps rising so that today only speculators can afford it. Average cropland here, \$150 per acre 20 years ago, now goes for \$1,300 per acre. Onnen rents land at \$65 an acre, "and that's cheap—most of it goes for around \$100."

"A father can't set his sons up in farming the way mine did 20 years ago," said Onnen. "The land's not available, or when it is, the only ones who can afford it are the doctors and dentists and businessmen. They buy it for an investment or a tax write-off and rent it out to farmers for as much as they can get. That shouldn't have been allowed to happen."

Inequities in government policies bother the Onnens. The lead headline in a recent issue of the daily paper from nearby Willmar (received by mail a day late, they pointed out) told of good news for sugarbeet farmers in the form of planned government subsidies. They live in heavy sugarbeet territory.

"If the government is going to subsidize sugar," said Marcia, "they should subsidize everything. Sure, sugarbeet farmers have been having a tough time, but we're having a tough time, too."

When they hear about food surpluses, they tend to disbelieve. "If there's a surplus, why are they importing so much?" asked Marcia. "And when they import things like cheese, why are the standards so different than for us? Some of the imported cheese says right on the package, 'not for animals,' because they have a lot of hog cholera and hoof and mouth disease in foreign countries. But they really test our milk; the state inspectors are in the creamery every month."

Dairy farmers have their own special problems, among them the closing of

many small creameries over the years, which cut out competition in the price of milk and caused a longer haul—35 miles now for the Onnens, for a pickup charge of \$60 a month.

In addition, milk cows are a 365-day-a-year job. When the family takes a rare trip to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul, two and a half hours away, they must leave after morning milking and return before the evening stint.

Vacations? "They're over for us," said Marcia, explaining that their 18-year-old son, who formerly handled the milking while the Onnens took a week off every third year, is now away at a vocational-technical school.

Farmers, said Onnen, don't understand the marketing system by which their products are priced. "The money men—they rule the country," said Marcia. "We don't understand bargaining and hedging and the commodities market, but that's how the market is controlled."

"All I know," said Onnen, "is before you've even got a kernel of corn in the ground they tell you how many bushels you're gonna get per acre. They wait for some report from Wall Street and there goes the price. They estimate it even before the corn is there."

They kept returning to the price inequities. "I bought a plow in the '60s for \$850," said Onnen. "This year I needed a new one and the exact same thing was \$3,000. I have to borrow the money and pay 9 percent interest."

"We used to pay \$800 taxes," Marcia chimed in. "The last two years they've been \$1,300 — and the land hasn't changed."

"Farmers are paying hardly anything on their debts," said Onnen. "If they're making the interest payments, that's about it. They're not spending and they're not paying their bills."

Marcia hasn't had to skimp in the home because it's largely self-sufficient and "we never bought a lot of luxuries." She and their three daughters, aged 17, 14 and 10, sew most of their clothes. A few chickens and pigs and a vegetable garden provide for an estimated three-fourths of the Onnens' food; they buy only beef and staples.

Besides doing all the bookkeeping, Marcia works outdoors too: "I plow, help with milking, bale hay." The girls, she said, feed the calves before catching their 7:30 a.m. school bus and do "all the cooking when I'm in the field."

For themselves, the Onnens have a simple demand: "a fair price for what we do." Now earning \$8.75 for 100 pounds of Grade B milk (made into butter and cheese), they think they should get \$10. (They also tend to think a free market situation, without government controls, would be best.) "The farmers have always been satisfied because they could eat," said Marcia. "But the younger ones are no longer satisfied, 'cause everything's gone up but what we get."

"Farmers are going to start doing something," Onnen added. "Strike, or quit buying high-priced equipment..." If they unite on a goal and a protest action, Onnen said he'd go along with it.

"We gotta do something. The way it is now is no good."

Nancy James is a free-lance writer in Minneapolis. This article appeared in the December issue of *Rural America*, the monthly voice for small town and rural people, 1346 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

A farmers' strike is no circus; it's serious business

By Timothy Lange

SPRINGFIELD, COLO.—FRANCES KITZMILLER's parents built a dugout sod-house near here when they homesteaded 320 acres in 1912. When Kitzmiller was 11, in 1930, she joined her father and older brother in the fields, and about "25 or 30 years ago" began farming on her own.

She saw good times and bad, but the years of hard work that so deeply lined her face allowed her to extend her holdings to 2,600 acres, to build a better house and to accumulate some savings.

Last week, wearing green coveralls and a frown, she sat in the lobby of the First National Bank of Springfield waiting to ask for an extension on her loan of about \$50,000. Her savings are gone and the equity in her farm is being eroded, she complained bitterly.

It isn't that she's stopped working hard. Her last two wheat and milo crops were good ones. But because the cost of producing those crops was so high, and the price she could sell them at was so low, she was forced to borrow against future earnings just to stay in business. She's not alone; thousands of other farmers have done the same.

Until recently banks have willingly granted loans and extensions because inflation and speculation were boosting the value of farmland. Now, however, land prices are tumbling and most rural banks are at their loan limits.

A vice president at First National here, W. Royce Moffett, says the managers of the Minnesota-owned bank sympathize with farmers, but, "We can't play Santa Claus. We have a responsibility to our stockholders."

Kitzmiller got her extension, but many have not been so lucky. The Agriculture department estimated in April that as many as 10 percent of the farmers in the nine-state wheatbelt region would be forced off the land by low prices this year. Another 40 percent, the USDA report said, would have to refinance their operations. Farmers elsewhere in the nation, whether growers of milo, wheat, corn, sugar or cattle, face similar pressure.

The current crisis is only one part of a long term trend toward bigger farms and fewer owners. Since 1936 bad times, technology, corporate farming and land speculation have driven 22 million family farmers into the cities. Only about 2.8 million fulltime farmers are left to work the land they own.

Not everyone sees this as a problem, however. Andy Kurtz, the manager of the Colorado Farm Bureau, an affiliate of the agribusiness-dominated American Farm Bureau, claims that only inefficient farmers are going broke. This, he says, is the function of the free enterprise system.

Few farmers around Springfield agree. After first spitting in response, one farmer here says, "He's wrong, he's absolutely wrong, he couldn't be more wrong. I'm efficient, and I'm losing money."

No circus.

Renegotiating loan payments cannot guarantee future solvency for Kitzmiller and her neighbors. So she and undetermined numbers of others are pinning their hopes on the efforts of the American Agriculture Movement, the farm-protest organization whose national headquarters is located a block down Main Street from the bank.

The organization's unofficial patriarch,

50-year-old Derral Schroder, is usually there, repeating what he has told scores of reporters who've come here since mid-September: "This isn't a circus. We mean business."

The business at hand is coordinating a work stoppage to focus national attention on the worsening problems of family farmers. The strikers say they will refuse to plant, harvest or buy non-essential goods until the federal government stops their slide into bankruptcy.

Like other grass-roots campaigns, this one is being run on little money and much enthusiasm. Though recently incorporated for legal reasons, American Agriculture is unstructured. It has no dues, no membership lists and no elected leaders.

Facing the street inside the offices, a banner proclaims "Strike 77," and red pins in a wall-map designate the organization's scattered "affiliates." Most of the 300-odd pins in 30 states are clustered in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, northern Texas and southern Georgia.

Besides keeping in touch with those affiliates, Schroder and dozens of volunteers spend their long days cajoling friends, neighbors and complete strangers into joining the strike and participating in various "tractorcades," the farm version of protest marches.

From here to Plains, Ga., columns of slow-moving John Deeres and Allis-Chalmers have dramatized farmers' feelings to city folk. If the tractors were tanks, the battlecry surely would be "Parity!" and the enemy the new federal farm bill. The bill does not offer parity.

Parity is the goal.

A measure of relative farm purchasing power, parity is reached when a unit of production, say a bushel of wheat, will buy what it bought in 1910-1914, a time of comparative farm prosperity. At parity, a farmer can make installment payments, cover production costs and make a "profit" that for many small producers amounts to their only wage.

During the past growing season farmers received only about 63 percent of parity prices. Terry Evans, a 30ish Vietnam war veteran who farms 1560 acres losing \$50,000 last year, explains, "If every time you take a dollar to the bank and exchange it for 63 cents, you're going to wise up soon. That's the situation the farmer is in."

Were it not for the federal loan-support program, the difficulties of farmers might be even worse. Under the program a farmer can store a crop and use it as collateral for a government operating loan when the free-market price is below the federal price floor. If prices rise, the farmer can sell the stored crop, pay off the loan and pocket the difference.

But the price floor set by the new federal farm bill, say farmers, is much too low. The government will loan a farmer only \$2.25 a bushel for wheat that has a parity value of \$5.03. And because there is so much grain available, the government is often the farmer's only market. At \$2.25 a bushel, even the most frugal producer loses money.

Paradoxically, the more grain grown, the more money lost. Reflecting on two years of bumper crops that have swelled storage bins and depressed prices, Schroder says, "We'd have been much better off if we'd gone on strike a year ago."

The overproduction that plagues farmers is a creation of Nixon's free-market

economic advisers. Former Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz encouraged farmers to plant "fence row to fence row," and promised ample markets at good prices. Huge overseas sales boosted grain prices above parity for a short time, leading farmers to plant more in the belief that Butz was assuring them prosperous times ahead.

But, as so often in the past, boom turned to bust. As one record crop after another glutted the grain market, prices dropped to 57 percent of their peak. Meanwhile, the costs of natural gas, fertilizer and farm implements soared and farmers were squeezed.

The wildly fluctuating grain prices didn't hurt everyone. A half dozen dealers who control 90 percent of the grain market, together with futures speculators made a killing. Despite lower prices paid to farmers, food processors and merchants have continued to escalate food prices and maintain high profit margins. Ironically, farmers find themselves spending more for bread, yet getting less for the wheat used to make it.

If the government were to raise the price floor of its loan-support to parity levels, taxpayers would have to subsidize wheat at nearly \$3 a bushel. That is not what the strikers want. Instead, they say, the government should maintain parity-level "free-market" prices with crop restrictions that prevent the cheapening effects of overproduction. This, they admit, would raise consumer prices, but eliminate the need for a subsidy.

The strikers have also called for an end to "speculation, manipulation and big-money influence in our marketplace."

Skepticism over strike's potential.

Many people, farmers included, are skeptical of the strike's potential. The huge grain reserves, the characteristic inde-

pendence of farmers and lobbying by graindealers, they say, are formidable obstacles.

Too, there has been a notable lack of support from other national farm groups. While the National Farm Organization and the National Farmers Union have expressed sympathy, they've refused to endorse the strike, and the American Farm Bureau is openly hostile.

That doesn't disturb Schroder. "I don't care what the leaders of those organizations say; they've lost touch with their members."

Doubters have also pointed out that previous farm strikes have been noisily ineffective.

It is true, strike supporters agree, that the NFO-initiated attempt to halt milk, beef and pork production in the early '70s failed, but the "farm holiday" movement of the 1930s, on the other hand, was a qualified success, exerting enough pressure that Congress passed the ameliorative farm acts of 1933 and 1938.

Thus far, nothing dramatic—like the armed anti-foreclosure efforts of the '30s—is planned by American Agriculture because its leaders believe the strike will be enough. Some are so optimistic they expect 40 percent of the nation's farmers to join the strike and believe they'll get positive results within 30 to 60 days.

Behind the public display of determination, however, lies an inner foreboding. Notes on \$105,000 of Terry Evans' \$475,000 debt come due next month. He thinks the bank will extend the loan this time, but if the strike fails, he'll have to leave the land and become a "mechanic or carpenter" in one of the cities he detests.

Pushing back his red tractor cap and staring at the floor, he said softly, "I'd sure hate to lose it all."

Timothy Lange is a writer in Denver.

Let's organize; go cooperative

By Linda Heiden

MANITOWOC COUNTY, WISC — "These people planning to strike for 100 percent parity Dec. 14 can be related to a dog chasing a car. What are they going to do with it when they get it? How are they going to keep it?"

Wisconsin dairy farmer Ed Klessig sympathizes with the wheat and corn farmers who've organized American Agriculture, the fledgling group that called for a general strike last week. "This is an act of desperation, and it will dramatize the situation in the minds of the public and develop an awareness that something is amiss in this whole price structure," he says.

But he considers their planned action "an emotional thing" lacking the foresight and solid organization to maintain whatever concrete gains they may win.

Klessig's lack of enthusiasm for the strike seems to be widely shared in this dairyland region. While it's difficult to find a farmer in the area who does not agree that agriculturalists face a serious economic crisis, Manitowoc area dairymen, like others around the upper Midwest, find themselves relatively well off, with prices for dairy products nearly stabilized.

"Especially here in Wisconsin, we've had a heck of a nice feed crop this year—three to four cuttings of alfalfa and the best corn crop ever. That cheap feed is going to lull a lot of farmers around here into a sense of 'Gee, everything is just great. Why should we worry?'" says hog farmer Mike Dewane.

Dewane would like to see farm producers organize themselves, but argues that the solution lies in producer-con-

trolled marketing cooperatives.

"The only way to change our problems is to organize ourselves, stop worrying about how much everybody makes in-between, and price our produce at the farm gate. The average farmer has never thought to act as a businessman. All our lives we've been fed this 'bull' that we should live poor and die rich. But as one of our girls told [an extension agent] recently, 'I need money now to buy my kids shoes. I can't worry about the estate that I'm building for myself.'"

Organizing among Wisconsin dairy farmers has concentrated on forming marketing cooperatives, but the problem, according to Dewane, is that they're usually regional or local in scope.

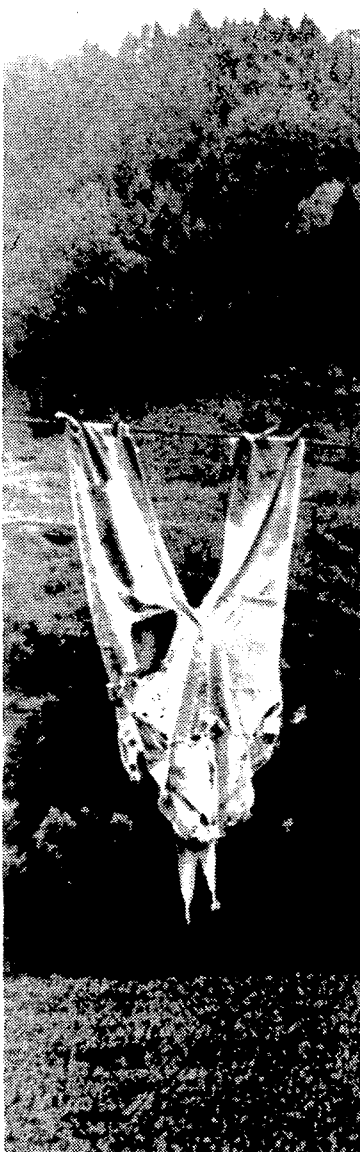
"They can't sell all their product locally, and so they must depend on Kraft, Borden, or whatever company is out there. And of course, the company is usually nation-wide, so it sets the price on the product. It puts its milk into every store in whatever area the local co-op is, and the local co-op can't compete. In other words, they can't sell any cheaper than the big companies because then they couldn't give their farmers any more than they could get elsewhere. So the co-ops are really hemmed in."

Dewane, however, claims that the National Farmers' Organization (NFO), to which he belongs, has made considerable progress in stabilizing hog prices with such a co-op strategy. "If NFO wasn't in the hog market, we'd be getting \$5 per hundred [pounds of pork] less than we are today. The nationwide kill on hogs has gone from 260,000 head per day to 320,000 since Aug. 1, and our price is still the same as it was then."

Linda Heiden is a free-lance writer in Chicago.



Like any other business farming has its own economics of scale, and they happen to favor the family farm. But due to the economic power and political influence of corporate America, public policy favors agribusiness.



Hard times fo

By Robert Bildner

WHAT'S IT LIKE DOWN ON THE southern farm? Jim Grady, a Kentucky farmer, can tell you. In Jim's part of the country the average farm has 120 acres of land, a small tobacco allotment, a few pigs, some cattle, and a garden.

Grady has been farming for 28 years, working his way up from sharecropping with a mule to owning a tractor and a few acres of land. Farming four acres of tobacco (mostly with leased allotments), 14 acres of corn, 25 of hay, and one of tomatoes, he earns about \$6,000 a year.

Grady would like to expand his vegetable production. Until recently there was no market for fresh vegetables. Five years ago, a good-natured county agent helped farmers organize a vegetable marketing co-op to aid low-income farmers.

The co-op has been a great success and enabled farmers like Jim Grady to earn much-needed income and improve their farms. The co-op, however, has reached the limits of its capacity.

Some of the local farmers would like to build a cannery for the produce that cannot be sold in the fresh market. A co-op could be of great benefit, not only for the farmers but for the entire county, but low-income co-ops face serious obstacles and must constantly struggle for survival.

Like Jim Grady, Charles Pascal is a small farmer struggling to remain on the land. But there is a major difference between the two: Jim is white and Charles is black. Inflation, the cost-price squeeze, technological change, and the racism of the rural white establishment have combined to drive many black farmers like Charles from farming.

Small farmers' common problems.

Small farmers like Jim Grady and Charles Pascal have many common problems, such as credit, land, and marketing. Rural banks are conservative lenders, small farmers like Grady and Pascal often don't have the high collateral necessary to qualify for commercial loans.

The Farmers Home Administration (FHA), which was established to provide credit for farmers who could not qualify for other credit, has been guilty of "creaming." As FHA's mandate required it to help farmers who could benefit from its loans, it has helped whites more than blacks and the affluent more than the poorer farmers.

After investigations by Congress, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Justice, FHA's poor record of loans to minorities seems to be improving. However, small farmers will have to continue their struggle with FHA. There have reportedly been high-level discussions of the possibility of phasing out farm credit for "marginal" farmers.

In rural areas far from industry's path, large farmers have first priority for available land. In Charles Pascal's area of Louisiana, large white farmers, by social custom and because of their economic and political power, are given first preference to buy or rent.

In some areas of the South, small farmers can still find land to rent but they have little security. One small operator observed, "Land is plentiful when prospects are poor; but when they are good, the big operators grab all the land."

Land prices, even in remote areas, have also been soaring, putting land purchases beyond the reach of most small farmers.

The agricultural marketplace that buys

and sells the small farmer's crops is also a closed system. Federal agricultural programs determine the quantity and prices of many crops, and these programs have often discriminated against small farmers.

"King Cotton," still an important southern crop, is a notorious example. In 1971 the top 20 percent of recipients in the cotton program received nearly three-fourths of all the benefits. While the Queen of England received a \$68,000 subsidy payment for her Mississippi cotton plantation, small farmers have had their allotments cut.

When John Bales, a black cotton farmer in the Mississippi delta, complained after his allotment was decreased, the local federal office told him "Get out of here you black s.o.b. or we'll turn the sheriff on you." Pressing his case to the state officials, Bales learned that USDA had increased the total allotments in his county but that only large farmers had received increases.

Because small farmers like Bales, Pascal and Grady are usually poor, relatively uneducated, and unorganized, they are fair game for the large shippers and processors that control many agricultural markets.

In Charles Pascal's county, for example, a few large sweet potato shippers once completely controlled the local market, keeping prices low. "The prices for number one potatoes were so low those days that it just wasn't worth it to the farmer to grade his potatoes," Pascal recalled.

He and a number of other small farmers resisted by organizing their own self-help sweet potato marketing cooperative, which was met with suspicion and hostility by the local establishment. But Pascal's co-op eventually succeeded and forced local sweet potato shippers to raise the prices paid to local farmers.

Contract agribusiness.

Self-help farmer co-operatives and other farmer organizations may be the only salvation for small farmers. Salvation is never too late, but it may be hard to come by in these days of southern agribusiness. While prosperous small farms are a rarity, agribusiness is increasingly common in the South.

Contract farming is one way that agribusiness controls farmers. Although precise arrangements vary, a farmer will contract with a corporation to grow a certain crop at a specified price. The corporation supplies the farmer with seeds, fertilizer, and other inputs; the farmer in turn supplies his labor and land.

Contracting can be beneficial to the farmer by guaranteeing him a market and a price for his product. However, the farmer pays for his security with lower prices and by sacrificing his independence. He becomes, in effect, an employee of the contractor.

Stokely van Camp is a major agribusiness enterprise. Paul Stephens, a small Kentucky farmer, has grown 35-40 acres of green beans for Stokely van Camp for several years.

Pete sharecrops or rents most of the 400 acres he farms and is barely able to earn enough money to support his family.

Fortunately for its stockholders, Stokely van Camp does not share Pete's financial problems. In 1973 this corporation ranked 362th in *Fortune's* 500 in sales and 420th in net earnings.

Tropicana Products, Inc., another large corporation, controls the production of thousands of acres of Florida citrus land

Southern farmers



by contracting with citrus growers. Tropicana and 13 other agribusiness corporations, including Coca-Cola, account for some 60 percent of the citrus products (and a higher proportion of farm labor employment) in Florida.

Consolidation in broilers.

The broiler industry provides another example of large corporations that have taken over the market. Most of the nation's chicken farmers are under contract with southern-based agribusinesses.

These large, vertically-integrated corporations own hatcheries, feedmills, processing plants, retail outlets, and contract (actually hire) small farmers to raise the broilers.

The largest broiler corporation in the world is Holly Farms, Inc., of Wilkesboro, N.C. C.F. Lovette, a North Carolina businessman, formed Holly Farms in 1969 from 16 poultry-oriented companies in the Wilkesboro area.

When Lovette began to create his empire, 60 percent of all broilers were grown by independent farmers. By 1974 corporations like Holly Farms produced 98 percent of the nation's broiler chickens. The independent chicken grower disappeared.

Holly Farm grew by acquiring control of each link in the process: hatching, feeding and processing. Holly's investment paid off. In 1973 the corporation processed 182 million broilers, 3.5 million broilers each week. This single "farm" accounted for half of the pre-packaged broiler market and 5 percent of the total broiler market.

Vertically-integrated broiler corporations sign contracts with individual farmers to raise the broilers. Such contracts are notoriously low. In 1969, a good year for broilers, the net return to the average broiler farmer was only \$2,000 per year. Often the contracts tie the farmer's payments to market prices and to the farmer's efficiency, computed by the corporation.

The individual grower loses his independence because the corporation determines the number of broilers that each grower may sell. It's "poultry peonage" for the farmer, but a different story for the corporation. In 1973 Holly Farms, Inc., earned \$11,502,000 before taxes.

What has happened to broilers, vegetables, and citrus is now happening to hog production. Vertically-integrated corporations are poised to take over the Southern hog market.

An extinct species.

As agribusiness giants like Holly Farms, Stokely van Camp, and Ralston Purina continue to grow, small farmers like Jim Grady, Charles Pascal, and Pete Stevens are rapidly becoming an extinct species.

Corporate farming is known to be inefficient. Eric Thor, agricultural economist and former administrator of USDA's Farmer Cooperative Service has said, "There is plenty of data to show that large corporations have higher production costs and get lower yields than do farms where the operator is a part owner."

"The real risk in a hired manager is that he can't make decisions very well...

He knows that if he makes a bad decision he might get fired, so he waits for someone higher up to approve it. Sometimes it's too late to save a crop."

Like any other business, farming has its own economies of scale, and they happen to favor the family farm. But, because of the economic power and political influence of corporate America, public policies favor agribusiness.

Most, if not all, public agricultural policy is geared to increasing the profitability of large-scale farming. Federal tax policies have enabled wealthy investors to benefit from "hobby farming" and have encouraged the growth of corporate agriculture.

Public funds have been spent on agricultural research, such as for the development of mechanized harvesters, that have contributed to the profits of agribusiness and large scale farm operations while doing little to aid the small farmer.

Public agencies, such as the Cooperative Extension Service, Farmers Home Administration (FHA) and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) have also been guilty of widespread discrimination against minorities and the poor.

Part of the problem is the scarcity of minorities on ASCS and FHA committees and in state and county offices. In 1970, there were only two black county ASCS Committeemen, and only 385 blacks on the 7,000 FHA county committees that determine loan eligibility. Only 232 out of the 2,007 ASCS county employees were minorities in 1970, and

only seven of these were above GS-5. A March 1971 survey found only 5 percent of the FHA managers/supervisors in the South were black.

The Extension Service, established to provide technical and managerial assistance to farmers in order to increase productivity, was racially segregated in the South until 1964. It has also lacked an effective outreach program, and generally failed to aid small farmers to any extent.

While some county agents cite understaffing as a prime cause, some freely admit they see little future for "marginal" farmers and can more profitably spend their time working with large successful farmers.

The more than three-quarters of a million small southern farmers can make a significant contribution to our food supply and to the quality of life in the South. However, unless significant changes in agricultural policies are made, many of these farms will cease to exist.

The small farmer problem is not strictly a southern problem. The disappearance of small farmers from the South and other regions means a disproportionate rise in the economic and political power of a few corporate giants.

Robert Bildner is a former research associate of the Southern Regional Council's Small Farmers Research Project. This is a shortened version of an article that appeared in "Our Promised Land," Vol. II, Nos. 2 & 3 of *Southern Exposure*, the invaluable guide to the South published by the Institute for Southern Studies, Box 230, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514; available by subscription for \$8 per year.



Today's women's farm movement faces the same tension between the impulse to see the small farmer as the last refuge of the small entrepreneur and the recognition of the need and power of organization that has wrecked past movements.



A new breed of farm women fighting to survive

By Judy Strasser

MADISON, WISC.—JUST BEFORE her death in 1965, the photographer Dorothea Lange completed a study of the American country woman. Lange's pictures, taken over a span of three decades, document our stereotype. Her farm wives proudly display "the world's best apple pie," and shelves of home-canned vegetables. They cook in well-scrubbed kitchens and tend their large farm gardens. A few, poor whites and blacks, pick cotton in other people's fields.

These country women belong to history. Today's farm wives strike a different pose. They appear occasionally in the popular press, bucking tractors out of quagmires or cleaning out cattle pens. They rally in state capitals, harangue striking dockworkers, and address Rotary club lunches on proposed farm labor bills.

The Wall Street Journal sagely explains that the U.S. is developing a "new breed" of farmwife: "her husband's business partner, involved in nearly all aspects of their complex farming operation."

Urbanization, new technologies and the agribusiness industry's increasing control of the American food supply have created this "new breed." Indeed, they have generated an entire movement of activists fighting tooth and nail for the survival of their families' businesses and their way of life.

Laura Heuser, a Michigan farm wife who has spent the past six years traveling around the country organizing women in agriculture, is one of the movement's strongest voices.

"We consider agriculture a high and holy calling," Heuser says. "We grow food—we feed people." But, she warns, "...ever-growing interference from the 95 percent of the people we free for other pursuits—and from a government that has grown bureaucratic and avaricious—has put our efficient industry in an intolerable position. We are determined to defend this industry...for a hungry world, for our own futures, and that of our daughters and sons."

Power in unity.

Oregon Women for Agriculture organized in 1969 in response to a threatened state ban on field burning, the farmers' traditional means of destroying weed seeds and preparing fields for new crops of grasses like wheat or rye. Two years later, Women for the Survival of Agriculture formed in Michigan to oppose a bill that would have ended piece rate pay for fruit pickers.

The two groups were introduced in 1972 by Sister Thomas More Bertels. A history professor at a Wisconsin college, Sister Thomas More believes that farmers have lacked power because of "disunity." Farm wives, she feels, have the time, the organizational ability, and—most important—the personal stake in the future needed to save the family farm.

The Michigan and Oregon women decided to spread their message across the U.S., and Laura Heuser and other organizers traveled extensively urging farm women in more than a dozen states to form women in agriculture groups. In 1974 the state organizations joined forces as American Agri-Women.

The greatest growth of the farm women's movement occurred in response to the consumers' movement—specifically to the beef boycott organized by Los An-

geles housewives in early 1973. Nancy Smidle, now president of Wisconsin Women in Agriculture and a coordinator of American Agri-Women, remembers that as "a time that farm women were looking for an organization...that would get out and tell a story about what you were really doing if you were boycotting beef."

Mrs. Smidle takes care of the calves and keeps the books for her family's 500 acre, 300 cow dairy farm. Like most of the women involved in the new movement, she is white and her family is prosperous.

The movement derives much of its appeal from its assertion that in unity there is strength. "We choose unity. We choose survival," Laura Heuser says.

American farmers—and especially farm wives—still lead isolated lives. Jane Johnson, coordinator of the United Methodist Church Women's Farm Project, says it is a "traumatic thing" to bring together women whose previous organization experience has been limited to their local church and their own commodity groups.

A participant at a recent national conference of women in agriculture agrees. She describes feeling a tremendous surge of excitement and power when she learned that women who produce different commodities in very different geographical regions share common problems and goals.

Narrow base of identity.

But the tension between the farmer's view of himself as a small businessman/rugged individual/champion of the free enterprise system, on the one hand, and his recognition of the power of organization, on the other, has wracked (and wrecked) potentially progressive farm movements in the past. This same tension exists in today's women's farm movement.

The dangerously narrow identity of the movement excludes Chicana farmworkers, black sharecroppers, and even the young, white organic and subsistence farmers who have recently gone back to the land.

Last November, American Agri-Women adopted as a major goal "to create public acceptance that farming is a business that must make a profit to survive." The movement actively opposes anything it perceives as a threat to the profit potential—and hence the survival—of the business of family farming.

These threats include state and federal law governing wages, working conditions, or housing of agricultural laborers, regulations on the use of agricultural chemicals and any consumers movement aiming to keep food prices low.

Thus California Women for Agriculture, in one of its earliest acts, joined the fight against a strong agricultural labor relations act put on the November 1976 ballot by a United Farm Workers' initiative drive. The initiative measure lost. American Agri-Women is currently lobbying for amendments to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act to protect "pesticide users' rights." These amendments would weaken Environmental Protection Agency control over pesticides. And Oregon farm women confronted the wives of striking longshoremen in the winter of 1971-72, claiming that the long dock strike prevented \$215 million worth of farm products from leaving the Northwest.

The women's farm movement also refrains from attacking the agri-business

industry. Women in the midwest interviewed by IN THESE TIMES quoted misleading statistics, apparently supplied by California Women in Agriculture, to "prove" that family farms dominate agriculture out west. If agribusiness is not a threat in California, the midwesterner implied, it is hardly a threat at all.

"I have heart trouble when I read these blanket condemnations of the Jolly Green Giant-type corporate farmers," writes Sister Thomas More Bertels in a recent

newsletter of Wisconsin Women in Agriculture. "Why don't we select out the good guys in this group and give them a few brownie points? They could well be the pacers to the whole industry."

The farm women's movement wants the family farm to survive. But its policies reflect the long-term interests of the agribusiness industry. Its positions on farm labor, environmental controls, energy allotments, and land use mirror those of the big corporations. ■

Fighting oligopoly

ZENDA, KANSAS—ANNA MAY MARTIN grew up in the 1920s and '30s near Attica, Kan., about 20 miles from the land she and her husband Eldon now farm.

Chores and 4-H blue ribbons filled her childhood. Before she married, she went to college. Then she taught kindergarten and grade school for six years before her children were born. Since then, Anna May Martin's work has been mostly on the farm.

The Martins' 900 acres belonged to her husband's family. "We are doing now what four or five adults were doing before." The only help they have are some high school boys who work around the garden and in the house, learning to grow and cook big farm meals and take them to the fields.

Her chores, Anna May Martin says, are not much different from her own mother's. But "she had seven children and there was always someone in the house to do the cooking and all when she would go out and drive the truck." Anna Martin adds, "I cover a far broader range of work because I have run the combine in a pinch."

She also keeps the books for the farm and for the custom wheat-cutting operation Eldon Martin runs each year.

Despite the long hours she puts in on the farm, Anna May Martin is an active member of the United Methodist church. Last year she got involved in a church study project designed to help farm women meet what the church considers an "awesome responsibility."

Women like Anna Martin produce the world's food, says Jane Johnson, the project's coordinator, and herself a farm wife. "You cannot separate food policy from food production, or from the injus-



tices that go on in both."

The project educated Anna Martin and turned her into an activist. She credits *Eat Your Heart Out* by Jim Hightower with introducing her to "agricultural oligopoly."

"I was astonished when I found out how the big conglomerates were taking over," she says. "It was so overwhelming that I thought, oh, I just can't get involved. But it has been a tremendous education. It has made me realize it is important to keep in contact with my legislators, and to read my husband's farm papers and magazines. I read them like the Bible, and I feel like I'm in the know now, where before I thought I didn't have time for that."

For the past year Anna May Martin has been organizing church women to research Kansas landownership. She wants to reveal the extent of corporate involvement in the state's agriculture. It is tedious, slow work, she says, and she is disappointed that more women do not recognize its importance. But she is a determined teacher.

"You won't believe it, but I even mentioned Hightower's book in my Christmas letter!" she laughs. "I told them how much I thought we'd all gain by reading it, and that I hoped they'd see to it that it got into their city library." —J.S.

Seeking new ideas

"OUR GROUP IS NEITHER consumer nor grower oriented. I think you could say we're system oriented, with emphasis on strengthening the 'radical' agriculture network..." Judy Gillan, a member of the Massachusetts Women in Agriculture, Food Policy and Land-Use Reform (MWIA), emphasizes the distinction between her group and the broader movement of women in agriculture.

MWIA began as a task force of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women.

The group—which remains very small, and centered in Northampton and Amherst—criticizes the traditional approach to agriculture policy-making. "People who are involved in the land grant colleges are continuing to use the old 'agriculture as a business' as a model. Decisions made on that model won't come out right," Gillan says.

MWIA first produced a newspaper centerfold they called "Digging In." "We wanted to...start talking to people about ways in which they could take control over food production and land use."

The centerfold introduced readers to a

recently passed state law that gives Massachusetts citizens access to public lands for farming and gardening. It also included a crop-by-crop planting guide.

"Digging In" noted that Massachusetts produces only 15 percent of its own food requirements. Even as recently as World War II, the state had been more self-sufficient.

MWIA suggested that a return to self-sufficiency would make environmental and economic sense. Toward that goal they proposed creating community self-help canning centers: institutions to help city folk prepare cheaper food for winter use, and at the same time, support the efforts of growers who supply local crops at good prices at the season's peak.

The proposal received enthusiastic support from the community and funds from the federal and state governments. MWIA has already begun to work on grander schemes: store-front co-ops, a free soup kitchen that uses leftovers from the food co-ops, a small mill for grinding grains, warehousing facilities, and a resource and canning center.

The group is also working on a project to use a farmstead at a state mental

facility, the Belchertown State School, as a site to teach people interested in farming on a small or intermediate scale. "We heard a story about a student at the University of Massachusetts, in the Department of Agriculture, who asked when he would ever get around to learning how to handle any farm tools," Gillan laughs. "He was told that since that was an academic institution, he wasn't going to."

Right now, she says, there is only one place in the U.S. (the Frank Porter Graham Center in North Carolina) where a would-be farmer can learn "an ecologically sound, socially satisfying" kind of farming. MWIA's proposed New England Small Farm Institute would provide another.

MWIA presents its own set of contradictions. The group includes a woman

who is a grower, and another member who is a grower, and another member who farmed for 20 years before returning to school for a degree in landscaping.

The group studied the discriminatory effects of death taxes and land assessment practices on farm women, and "felt that their interest should be keen" in tackling such problems. But, Gillan says, most farm women respond with "Well, that's true, but I let my husband deal with that."

These Massachusetts farm women, Gillan adds, "have a very different attitude toward food than our group does. They have no fear of really heavily processed foods. You're just as likely to find Wonder Bread and stuff like that in their shopping bags as you are to find fresh produce." —J.S.

Farming the land

FRESNO, CALIF.—THE SUN GLARES over California's San Joaquin Valley, flooding heat onto the land. Furrows drenched yesterday with irrigation water now form muddy troughs between the bone-dry rows. A strong wind lifts the sandy top-soil between the seedling plants; it swirls in dusty gusts around us as we swing our hoes.

Jessie de la Cruz works next to me, a red bandanna tied over her straw hat, holding it close to her head. Her long dark braid bounces on her back as she weeds a row of peppers. She talks as she hoes, telling stories about herself and about the land she loves.

"My grandmother brought us up. It was very hard for her. She cried when we went hungry. She dreamed that some day she could grow food for us in a garden of her own."

Jessie de la Cruz wants to make her grandmother's dream her people's reality: she leads a movement for land reform in the U.S. She grows her family's food in the fields we hoe, harvesting melons and squash from vines sprawled between the pepper rows.

Jessie's family and three others own this small farm and work it cooperatively. From here—Rancho Bracero, the farmworkers' farm—they fight the monopoly of California's rich agricultural land.

You can see Rancho Bracero from several miles away. A small forest of cherry tomatoes climbing eight foot stakes rises high above the vast agribusiness fields stretched across the flat San Joaquin Valley floor.

Rancho Bracero stands out in other ways, too. It is a small farm, only 40 acres; an organic farm; a farm whose crops are grown by people in a valley where most farming is done by machines.

Jessie de la Cruz has worked in this valley for more than 40 years. She was born in Anaheim, Calif., in 1922, to migrants who followed the crops as they ripened from the south up toward Oregon. Her family lived in tents set up in dust or mud. Jessie did not sleep in a bed until her early teens. During the harvest her people gleaned fruits and vegetables for themselves from the corporate fields they picked. Jessie remembers hard winters and springs when she had a single tortilla for breakfast and went without lunch for weeks.

After she married, Jessie and her husband Arnold settled in La Colonia, a migrant camp in the poor Valley town of Parlier. Each spring they left to look for jobs planting, weeding or picking the crops grown on distant ranches.

When the work ended in one place, they packed up and moved on. Their six children went with them to the fields every day. "We put the little ones in metal tubs so they wouldn't get hurt or lost," Jessie says. The older children worked alongside the adults.

Each summer the de la Cruzes returned to Parlier to work for Russell Giffen, one of the big landowners nearby. For ten hours a day they chopped cotton, bending over their hoes, thinning the rows carefully to leave six or eight inches between every young plant.

"We couldn't talk or sing," Jessie says, "or the *contratista* (labor contractor) would get after us." At lunchtime, they often had to walk a half-mile to get to the water wagon. "By the time we got there, lunch was over and we had to walk back again." Giffen paid 75¢ an hour, not counting time off for lunch.

When Cesar Chavez began organizing farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley, Jessie and Arnold signed up. Her work as a union organizer and translator taught Jessie that almost all farmworkers dream of the day when they can sink roots in land of their own. She and Arnold began to talk with others about making those dreams come true.

In 1972 the de la Cruzes and five other families asked their old boss, Russell Giffen, if he had 160 acres for sale. "He said yes, if we had a half million dollars to buy the land and improvements, including machines we could not use. I told him, 'We measured that land inch by inch with our hoes!'"

Giffen's arrogance pushed Jessie to act. First she set out to show that small farmers could make good livings on San Joaquin Valley land. She and her friends found six acres to rent and work cooperatively. At the end of one season, four of the families used their shares of the profits to make a down payment on Rancho Bracero, a 40-acre cooperative farm.

But water is the key to farming success in the San Joaquin Valley. Jessie knew that farmworkers' coops would fail in the long run without access to the publicly-subsidized irrigation project that waters the big corporate farms. And access to water could not be won without massive land reform.

So in 1974 Jessie helped to found National Land for People (NLP), an organization devoted to breaking up land monopoly (IN THESE TIMES, Oct. 12). NLP's fight to obtain irrigated farms for small farmers in the country's richest agricultural region has pitted it against the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and powerful corporate landlords.

But Jessie de la Cruz has the optimistic faith of one who knows her cause is just. After long days in Rancho Bracero's fields, she goes to meetings that last late into the night. She recruits farmworker families for other small coop farms. And she talks about farmworkers and land monopoly with everyone she meets.

"The farmworker is the backbone of this country. We're the ones stooped over, doing the work." She swings her hoe and straightens up. "We are the true farmers. The others just own the land." —J.S.

Representing the needs of Rural America



While rural areas get only 20 percent of all federal housing subsidies, they have 60 percent of the country's bad housing.

By Joe Belden

WASHINGTON—THERE ARE AS many people in the rural U.S. as in the country's 153 largest cities. The fact that those 60 million citizens lack the private and public resources and services available to their city cousins provided motivation for the Third National Conference on Rural America.

Meeting here the first week of December, this gathering of nearly 2,000 farmers, workers, consumers, land reformers, housing and utility activists, organizers, environmentalists, and other advocates for the countryside was actually three conferences—on rural housing, rural health care, and "rural America." That last term covers agriculture, the elderly, women, farmworkers and education.

In all of those areas non-metropolitan Americans usually get the short end of the stick. Sometimes they get the stick broken over their heads. As Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland told the conference, there has been recent growth in rural areas, but "rural people still have the highest percentage levels of poverty, the poorest housing, the most inadequate medical care and the least access to public transportation."

The conference was put together by Rural America, a national membership organization that serves as a sort of populist-agrarian Common Cause. Founded in 1975 after a conference of that name, Rural America merged this year with the ten-year-old Rural Housing Alliance. The organization has a detailed platform covering many issues. A Washington-based staff coordinates policy research, information and action on rural needs.

Many needs.

The needs are many. Rural areas, for example, get only 20 percent of all federal housing subsidies but have 60 percent of the country's bad housing.

In 1974 non-metropolitan areas had six physicians for every 10,000 people, while metropolitan areas had 16. There are no medical doctors at all in 5,000 towns and 138 rural counties.

More than two-fifths of the working poor live in rural America. Two million rural adults lack a fifth-grade education. And rural median income is 27 percent less than the urban figure.

With these inequities in mind, Sen. James Abourezk (D-SD) told the assembled activists that "Today," for rural

and urban people, "our government is, in too many instances, a government of the few, by the few—and not for you, the ordinary citizen."

As the Great Depression lifted, Abourezk said, "major portions of urban and suburban America rushed forward in mad pursuit of the bitch-goddess success. They left trampled in the dust the millions of rural Americans to be content to diet on the leftovers of shattered dreams and broken promises. For too many Americans the horrors depicted in *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* are still an everyday reality of life."

Two of the most pressing rural concerns are the plight of the small farmer and the energy "crisis." Abourezk declared that the farmer, who has often been asked to turn the other cheek, "has turned all four cheeks in recent years." On energy, Abourezk noted that rural people in particular should be aware that in the past five years the top 20 oil companies have gained control over nearly 40 percent of the nation's known coal deposits.

New energy directions.

Barry Commoner, author of *The Closing Circle* and *The Poverty of Power*, also dealt with rural energy problems. Over the past few years Commoner's Center for the Biology of Natural Systems has done valuable research on organic farming and energy.

Commoner told the conference that, while industry has replaced human labor with energy-intensive machinery, agriculture is in the more precarious position of having used machines and chemicals to replace such natural and renewable energy and fertilizer sources as wind, wood, manure, grass and feed. He urged that the nation, and farmers especially, turn to solar energy and other appropriate technologies as alternatives to President Carter's energy blueprint.

Some of the new energy directions that Commoner advocated are being put into practice by the Small Farm Energy Project, a research and demonstration program in Cedar County, Nebraska. Dennis Demmell of the project's staff told a conference workshop that 25 small farmers in Cedar County are adopting a variety of practices to increase their energy self-sufficiency, including better insulation, wind pumps and generators, solar heating and grain drying, methane production from manure, composting of manure for fertilizer and the making of alcohol fuel from plants. The aim is to show that agriculture need not be so energy-intensive.

Housing is another issue of concern to rural people. Clay Cochran, executive director of Rural America, told the housing portion of the conference that the public goal should be "that every living soul in this country has a relatively wind-and-water-tight shelter with electricity, running water and a place to run the waste...where it won't pollute your water supply."

Cochran went on to say that the people living in such housing should "have to pay no more for debt, interest, insurance, taxes, maintenance, heat, water, and electricity than 25 percent of their income if they are low or moderate income people."

Outlining a policy, Cochran added, is easy; getting it implemented is not.

Inadequate programs.

The Farmers Home Administration, which now has \$8 billion a year to loan to rural people and communities, should be meeting much of the need. But at the rate the FHA is presently replacing bad rural housing in Kentucky, it will take 51 years to finish the job. In McDowell County, West Virginia, it will take 359 years and in Mingo County, West Virginia, 738 years.

Some government programs, like Farmers Home, fail even when specifically designed to help rural people. The Rural Development Act of 1972 has not even been

given the chance to succeed or fail due to inadequate funding.

Other federal programs are designed to discriminate openly against the needs of the countryside. The Carter administration's \$4 billion public works program, for instance, effectively redlines all towns with populations of less than 50,000. No public jobs for them.

The argument is that the cities' jobless rates are worse. But when discouraged job-seekers and the underemployed are figured in, it's clear that rural unemployment is much higher than the figures of the Bureau of Labor Statistics would indicate. One estimate of "subemployment" in rural Mississippi is 42 percent.

For most of the 20th century, people have left rural areas for urban ones. It was argued by many that rural problems would go away as an increasingly industrialized society provided jobs and a better, more "civilized" life in metropolis. Rural to urban migration, however, did not always make matters better for those who sought the city lights. Not everyone found a decent job—or even a job at all. The rural exodus thus helped create today's "urban crisis."

But the immediacy of urban problems has tended to confer a second-class citizenship on rural Americans, especially the poor. They are, as the Presidential Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty said in 1967, "the people left behind."

Returning to the country.

Recently though, flight to the cities has been turned on its head. Demographers at the Department of Agriculture have shown that during the 1970s rural areas have been gaining population faster than urban places.

This provides new human and fiscal resources for rural communities, but also puts stress on local services, already tight job markets, disappearing agricultural land and other problem areas.

The rural conference reflected both hopes and fears. Roger Blobaum, chairperson of Rural America, said, "Throughout the country, there is evidence that the problems of rural people are being treated with unaccustomed respect and interest... And yet, while the signs of a reawakening fill us with hope, much work needs to be done."

There was some tension at this gathering of people committed to so many different causes. Some farmers and environmentalists felt that others wanted to bring too much industry (and thus jobs) to rural areas. Some of the conflicts were reflected in the debate on resolutions and revisions to the Rural America platform.

Dealing with a very current rural movement, the conference also passed a resolution supporting, in general terms, the concept of a farmers' strike.

Yet despite some internal tuggings and pullings, there appeared to be a spirit of consensus, of closed or closing ranks in the face of adversity. But, for a change, it was an adversity tempered by hope. Sen. Abourezk may have summed it up when he said, "Like Woody Guthrie, we are secure in the knowledge that this land is our land—and we intend to keep it. But, like Langston Hughes, we will no longer tolerate a concept of a dream deferred."

Jimmy Carter, rural American, was asked to address the conference, but had to cancel at the last minute. Too bad, he might have picked up a few things. Rural activists hope, now that Carter has made that migration to the city, that he will not turn his back on the problems at his roots. One thing is certain: Carter is no dummy. Before setting out for the big town, before leaving the farm, he made sure he had a job waiting.

Rural America can be contacted at 1346 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Joe Belden is associated with the Exploratory Project on Economic Alternatives and the author of a study on national food and land policy.

Letters

Steve Biko memorial

Editor:

Congratulations for devoting your centerspread to a transcript of the interview with the murdered South African leader, Steve Biko (*ITT*, Dec. 6). It is important that American people be adequately informed as to the opinions advanced by South Africans struggling for their liberation.

Your readers may be interested to know that members of the Steve Biko Memorial Committee in Chicago are currently preparing a Steve Biko memorial tape. It will include the full 20 minutes of the interview, together with South African music, readings from Biko's published speeches, as well as a selection of poems dedicated to Steve Biko.

This tape costs \$4.95 (plus 25¢ tax) and can be ordered from: Steve Biko Memorial Committee, 39 S. La Salle St., Suite 825, Chicago, IL 60603.

—Dennis Brutus
Chicago

We fell into the same trap

Editor:

I enjoyed James Aronson's piece on Carrillo and also Saul Weiman's article on the attempts to discredit Carrillo. It seems true that various sectarian leftists were more concerned with smearing Carrillo than with a serious consideration of his views.

But didn't you fall into the same trap by printing two stories about the picket line business and hardly a word about Eurocommunism and what it means to Carrillo?

—John Wilson
Cicero, Ill.

Editor's note: Yes, we did. But we are trying to correct that by running excerpts of Carrillo's remarks at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C., on page 2 of this issue.

Flunkies and their would-be replacements

Editor:

Your coverage of the recent DSOC conference left me, and others with whom I've spoken, wondering if we were at the same meeting. Rather than being a "step forward" or some such drivel, I found that conference reinforced my view that DSOC is irrelevant and boring.

While some people may feel that tailing after the more mildly progressive elements of the otherwise stagnant trade union leadership is a useful pastime, I find it quite tiresome. Let me be specific:

1) After Vietnam, Chile and *Global Reach* U.S. leftists should know enough to pay attention to U.S. foreign policy;

2) The only speech on military spending and employment was not worth the price of admission: it was free. The president of the IAM would have us believe that if we let his union play Buck Rogers, unemployment would end.

3) The anti-Communism was its usual horror show. The only material being sold by DSOC at this, a "domestic" policy conference, was the usual repressed intellectuals in the USSR, early '50s nonsense.

4) The conference tailed after the labor line.

The fact is the trade unions are isolated and are losing strength due to mistakes they made in the past. They are in a bind and don't know a way out. Why should we follow them? An alliance is not an unconditional surrender. Besides we are less isolated than they are at this point.

Nasty? No, it is the truth. The con-

ference seemed to be the usual show of labor flunkies and their would-be replacements.

—Eric Kronstein, S.J.
Washington, D.C.

It ain't funny, McGee

Editor:

Barbara Garson's article "Around in circles with pollution" made me furious. Her put-down of recyclers and recycling denies the impact that recycling has had on people's consciousness concerning the solid waste problem specifically and all environmental issues in general.

She is belittling those of us who feel that the personal is the political and are trying to live by standards we feel are more environmentally sound. Her contention that I would have more effect on cleaning up the environment if I joined a revolutionary socialist organization is farfetched—revolutionary socialists didn't get the Oregon bottle bill passed. And the contention that we have pollution *because* of recyclers is absurd—we have pollution because there are too few recyclers. A nation of recyclers wouldn't have let things get so out of hand.

I don't expect to see articles in *ITT* ridicule progressive efforts—especially efforts to make changes on the personal level.

—Bob Eklund
Portland, Ore.

Who is this bum Carrillo?

Editor:

When Spanish "Eurocommunist" Santiago Carrillo crossed a line of striking workers at Yale, grabbing the few bucks he got from the university management, he was a scab. Like all such bums, he had an excuse for brushing aside the sacrifices of the strikers: he wanted publicity for his attacks on workers' governments and organizations. And sympathizing with Carrillo's dizzy courtship of the capitalist media, James Aronson (*ITT*, Dec. 6) expressed bewilderment at the union members, Communists and Socialists who rushed to defend the "sacredness" of the picket line. To uphold Carrillo's innocence, the author even stooped to cold war rhetoric about suspicions of a Moscow link.

If the author sincerely believed that Carrillo had to cave in to the strike-breaking demands of the Yale University management, he surely would have gained new insights into the strength of solidarity by interviewing veterans of the Lincoln Brigade on the strikers' side. Having held the line in Spain at terrible costs, they could have placed Carrillo's publicity stunt in proper perspective.

—Kevin P. Lynch
New York

Take this

Editor:

I was going to use these \$ to get a subscription to another publication, but since it already takes all my available time and energy to digest *ITT*, and since I would miss it if it were not around, I'm responding to the cleverness and pathos of your last fund appeal.

—Lois Levitan
Syracuse, N.Y.

The overwhelming majority opposed?

Editor:

"Winning Big in Houston" by Karen Wellisch only tells part of the story. First, we are to believe that Bella Abzug ran that last mile? With how many stops? Does Karen have it on film?

I, at one time, supported most of ERA. When the movement turned into a carnival they lost me. The "mess" in Houston was just a charade. I resent part of my tax dollars being used to pay for this "Freak show." Wellisch forgot to mention the nearly 20,000 who paid their own way to Houston—anti-ERA. Also our biased news media did a good job of ignoring the overwhelming majority opposed at Houston.

—A. Richard Kern
Lexington, Ky.

DIALOG

Socialist democracy: no weak link

In "Dialog" (*ITT*, Nov. 23) Hans Koning states that in the Soviet view "humanistic socialism [is] a weak link" while in the capitalist view humanistic socialism "is the thin edge of a wedge." He accepts these two views as the only choices available and therefore opts for the first. He contends that the socialist society must choose economic rights over democratic rights. He poses what he terms the "discipline" needed to build socialism against the luxury of allowing democratic practices within socialism.

With these opinions, Koning not only creates what should be a non-existent dichotomy between economic and democratic rights under socialism, he also gives credence to the arguments of apologists of capitalism when they seek to discredit the achievements of the socialist countries.

The dynamics of the ever-changing socialist society inevitably create new economic and social problems and challenges. Socialist solutions require the constant enlargement of democracy to utilize the freely expressed creative potentials of all the people. To confine wisdom to official declarations from above and basic decision-making powers in a small party hierarchy whose concept of democracy-at-work is the harnessing of the people to carry out its directives has proven costly in human life and also in the rate of socialist development.

These and not the false issue of "bourgeois-democratic individual rights"—were the issues involved in Lenin's warnings against the growth of a socialist bureaucracy. These were the issues inherent in the Stalin crimes. These were the issues that the Czechoslovak socialist government, party and trade unions sought to cope with in the short-lived Prague Spring.

The state of *socialist democracy* is the issue, not Jimmy Carter's phoney championship of "human rights" or the views of anti-socialist, anti-Soviet dissidents who upon arriving in the West show no understanding of either capitalism or socialism. Socialist democracy should be put in a very different context than that advocated by Koning and others in their strange defense of the Soviet Union.

It *should* make Moscow uncomfortable to defend its semi-officially condoned anti-semitism by counterposing it to the prevalence of racism in capitalist U.S.A.

Surely it should embarrass rather than please socialist countries that some of their Old Left defenders measure limitations of socialist democracy against the failings of capitalist democracy.

Capitalism is capitalism and as Marxists we have one analysis and one criteria of criticism of it. Socialism is something else again and as independent socialists we should have different criteria to analyze and criticize it. We should also have a totally different set of expectations from socialism. To defend the negatives in the socialist countries by balancing them out against the more horrendous negatives in the capitalist countries is insulting to socialist countries as it is insulting to the intelligence of the American people whom we seek to win to socialism.

For example, how explain that under socialist democracy Stalin's crimes endured unchallenged for 25 years while in capitalist democracy Lyndon Johnson and Nixon were driven out of the presidency. (That little was fundamentally changed in the capitalist structure as a consequence is the subject of a different analysis. It does not detract from the fact itself).

The Soviet constitutional guarantees

of free economic rights to its people are stupendous achievements. The constitutional claims to guarantees of democratic rights, however, are more illusory than real. They are essentially cancelled out by a "crime" termed "slander against the socialist state." In practice, this forbids free speech, dissent or criticism in the realms of party and government policies and actions.

Many persons lost their jobs in 1968 when they voted "no" in factory and institute meetings called to ratify by a show of hands the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Fourteen persons received prison terms for peacefully walking in Red Square with signs protesting that invasion. A complainant trying to file charges of anti-semitism on the job or in the community is charged with "slander against the socialist state" because officially there is no anti-semitism. And as a result of this official stance, there is no ideological struggle against anti-semitism among the people.

Some Old Leftists in our country defend the Soviet "slander" law by pointing to the suppressions in capitalist U.S.A. and by claiming it is, after all, a *socialist* state that is being slandered (with dissenting words). I for one cannot condone Soviet suppression on the basis that my husband spent six years in a capitalist prison for his Communist beliefs in the 1950s. The very difference in the *class* character of the socialist and capitalist states and the constituencies they serve make all the more odious and specious the equations, counterpositions and bases for justifications indulged in by some on the left.

These persons confuse the need to break the political and economic power of the capitalist class at the time of the socialist takeover with the ongoing mistrust the socialist leadership shows to its own people—even 60 years after the firm establishment of socialist power. This mistrust is codified again in the new Soviet constitution with the precept that only the party leadership (free from the controls of government, executive and legislative bodies, the people's organizations or a news media in any way independent of that leadership) can be trusted to guide, administer and govern.

Popularizing in our country the achievements of the many socialist countries does not require an "either-or," "which side are you on," unthinking defense of every aspect of life in those countries. In any case, there can be no artificial dichotomy in our country between the struggle for non-racist, non-sexist full economic rights and genuine democracy. As American Marxists our vision of socialism for our country has to be built upon all that our people have already won in their many decades of bitter struggle under capitalism—not a regression to the level of any other country's beginnings.

—Peggy Dennis

Peggy Dennis is the author of the recently published book, Autobiography of an American Communist: A Personal View of a Political Life. She lived and worked for various periods of time in the Soviet Union during the years 1930-72 and was foreign editor of People's World in the 1960s.

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Hans Koning

Politics and art

No more innocent bystanders



Shortly before he was shot by the fascists, the Spanish poet Garcia Lorca wrote, "The idea of art for art's sake is something *cruel*—if fortunately it weren't so ridiculous." Brecht used almost the same words when he said that for a writer "to speak of trees" showed a criminal indifference to human cruelty.

American writers have remained strangely untouched by this concept. John Updike, presumably one of our very sensitive novelists, has told us through the years that he was "just not interested in the Vietnam war." Norman Mailer, presumably one of our more radical writers, used the war resistance as one more amusing subject in his repertoire, basically as uninvolved as if his taxes, too, weren't paying for napalm; he once refused me his signature on a draft for a petition in the early, dangerous days with the remark that it hadn't been very elegantly put.

I assume that those men, if they could be bothered to answer, would say that politics and art do not mix, and that political art leads only to bad writing, novelists in prison, and paintings of peasants clutching ears of grain. In that vein, an *Atlantic Monthly* editor once informed a black writer that no black novel could be true art because by its very nature it was

"protest writing." The nerve of it! What they, like all good liberals, forget or never knew is that their above-it-all art and literature are not floating on some God-given aether, but are solidly founded on compliance with the politics of our day, on acceptance of the fruits of a system, and thus just as political in a hidden and hypocritical way as those Soviet boy-meets-tractor opuses or, for that matter, as a manual on how to make firebombs.

I realize that our western fund of writing, our very heritage, is about inner life, private emotions, and the conflicts of such emotions, with the outside world really but a setting: The emotions analyzed by the artists were about free will, love, loneliness and death, and they were of the essence for our civilization. Books, poems, plays and operas were written by (and for) people who had just discovered individuality, private fate, and the highs and lows of each man's and each woman's own and unique destiny. They were drunk with that discovery, and they could ignore its price: strikers had to be starved, children put to coal wagons, native villages burned down, to create and sustain that magic circle of civilized westerners appreciating fine literature and music and painting.

But that is no longer what we are at. We're a different breed. We know everything that's going on in this world, and we know or should know that we are not even innocent bystanders but heirs and profiteers of long centuries of exploitation of what is now called the Third World, an area on this planet stretching from the South Bronx to South Africa. How can art in these years of deadly awareness ask us to use our sense of pity and of sympathy and justice on a Chicago dentist who can't make it any more in bed? How could we still believe, as Ford Maddox Ford did when he wrote *The Good Soldier*, that "the saddest story I ever heard" (FMF's words) is about a man finding that his wife has an affair with his friend?

Not, assuredly, because private joy and despair, a private sense of humor and proportion, are not important. Not because the dreams of war, famine, and slavery need to be present in all we write. But because I do not want a description of *anything* from an observer who was just not interested in the Vietnam war. For isn't there a crucial piece missing in such a man, and mustn't it show in whatever he describes, no matter how local and individualistic? Isn't his reality irrelevant?

Hasn't a large part of our literature become a mental indulgence, a precise parallel to the physical indulgence of the fat world of the TV commercial? Aren't and shouldn't both those worlds be running out of fuel?

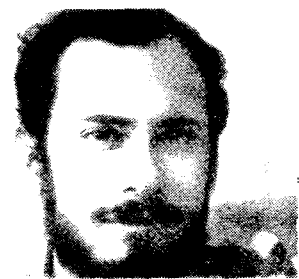
I feel that all of us who still possess the privilege of quietly typing away in warm dens or cold attics have accumulated a terrible debt, and that we should meet it by typing something that will *serve*. I don't think we have to exchange our being cruel with being boring or pedantic or shrill. Robert Coover's *Public Burning*, for instance, falls within my definition of writing that serves; and whatever it is, it's none of those three. Still, the marketing directors and the salesmen of our publishing houses must undoubtedly be less than enthusiastic about this call of mine. But shouldn't we ignore them? We tell Russian novelists to defy their censors. Dare we be scared of those who rule at home? ■

Hans Koning is a New York novelist and former reporter-at-large for the New Yorker. His latest novel, The Petersburg-Cannes Express, is now being filmed in Europe; his latest book of non-fiction, A New Yorker in Egypt, came out last winter.

Joshua Dressler

The free speech debate

The dangers of unlimited speech



A major philosophical question underlying the recent debate within *ITT* columns about free speech and the Nazis is the degree to which the "democratic socialist system" which the writer envisions will permit speech with which it disagrees. Some, although not all, of those who have written on the Nazi subject seem to subscribe to the view that such a state should permit absolute free speech. Unfortunately, however, such a view is untenable.

Actually there are two "absolute free speech" views often expressed in political circles. One is the pure theory. Quite simply, and simplistically, a society is better off when there are no restrictions on speech, and no punishment of any kind for speech once uttered. Most such adherents probably do not mean what they say, however. For example, suppose someone is falsely accused by a government official or by another citizen of a crime. Should such a victim be unable to sue for defamation? If we favor *total* free speech, then defamation suits must be permitted. Or suppose a corporation lies about its product. May we not punish, even criminally, such fraudulent speech? Or when Tony Boyle allegedly solicited by words the murder of an entire family. Should speech be that free? It is inconceivable to me that anyone would wish this seriously to disarm government, especially in the "democratic socialist state" envisioned.

There is a different "absolutist" position, however, that does not go so far. It would distinguish between *prior censorship*, which its adherents absolutely oppose, and punishment for harm that speech causes, which they *would* permit.

Thus, the fraudulent corporation, the defamer, and the murder-solicitor could all be punished, not for their speech as such, but for the harm that occurred as a result of it. The problem with this theory is obvious. Why should society have to

wait until the damage is done? Does not a society have a legitimate right to try to prevent the harm in the first place, and this necessarily requires censorship of such potentially dangerous speech. Moreover, it is hardly "free" speech when one may be punished for its effects—its desired effects—after the fact. Indeed, if one knows that punishment might occur, one is less likely to speak, in which case we do not have free speech anyway.

Neither concept of free speech, then, seems to me to be realistic. Even if we wish to make a distinction between "political free speech," which will be absolute, and "other speech" which will be potentially limited in some careful fashion, then we will have serious difficulty drawing a line between "political" and "non-political" speech. If I accuse another of being a Communist, is that political speech? Suppose I call for the murder of a President?

The point of all of this is not, of course, to suggest that speech is not a crucial interest, or that any democratic society can do without it. Indeed, we must permit a great deal of speech. But to suggest that a society can and should permit unlimited free speech is, in my opinion, to imply that speech is always harmless, that it is an ineffective political or social tool. In fact, it is a very powerful tool, for good or for evil, and I do not see how a society can permit entirely unlimited speech, no matter what its content.

It is not my intention here, in this short column, to suggest a meaningful test. I am suggesting that socialists must not become simplistic in their analysis of the question, they must not assume absolute free speech is the answer simply because it sounds good. Nor can distinctions between "political" and "non-political" speech be easily made, if such a distinction is to be made.

Indeed, it is not altogether clear what

is "absolute free speech," even if we believe in such an ideal. For example, suppose CBS-TV puts on prime-time television a 60-minute report that condemns all socialists. Must CBS give equal time to socialists? If so, are we not denying CBS *their* free speech, since it denies them the opportunity to use as they see fit the 60 minutes given to the socialists? If CBS need not be coerced into giving us the time, then *our* right of free speech is indeed meaningless.

Probably one of the most significant free speech/media issues to confront this society in the near future, and one about which socialists should begin to consider their position, is television violence. In Florida an attorney recently contended that his client was "brainwashed" into committing a murder by watching too many Kojak shows. That defense having failed, the networks are now being sued civilly for their effect. Likewise, a young woman was recently raped with a Coke bottle by a man who said he got the idea from watching a television movie. The network is being sued.

Meanwhile, the Institute of Child Development of the University of Minnesota has completed a study that indicates that children up to the age of about eight are affected deleteriously by television violence. Other child behavior scientists agree that such violence does make children more prone to imitate it.

It may be that such studies are wrong. But, suppose they are not. What is our stand? What position would we take if this were a "democratic socialist state." I can imagine various responses. The absolute pure free speech advocate would apparently have to suggest that television may reap its profits while society is harmed. Impure absolutists would say that the television networks could somehow be punished—after the fact, after much of the damage is done.

A few libertarians might suggest that there is no free speech problem. If the public does not want violence, it won't watch it. In other words, we get what we want. Frankly, such an argument is equivalent to the comment that if God wanted us to smoke He or She would have given us chimneys. This libertarian approach only indicates that its adherents are capitalists who believe that society's problems are solved by application of the supply and demand theory—if the public demands less violence, the supply will be reduced.

Some might suggest that our response ought not to be government censorship of such shows, but rather boycott of the advertisers of such programs. Boycott, of course, is a viable and sensible approach to many problems, including this one. But it does seem to be in conflict with socialist ideals, because again the strategy is capitalist in nature—using the profit motive to our advantage. Although in the short run—in this capitalist society—this is one viable technique to use, what about the long-term position? In a socialist society are we not going to favor organized public power, through the socialist government, to control the airwaves? If so, then we are suggesting that speech can and should be subject to control by government; that certain types of speech may be *verboten*.

The issue is not an easy one. It is time we throw off shibboleths, and look seriously at the issues. Otherwise, we can hardly expect to be credible with a public that is genuinely concerned about the danger of some speech, such as television violence. ■

Joshua Dressler is associate professor of law at Hamline University Law School in St. Paul, Minn. His column appears regularly.

ART & ENTERTAINMENT

FILM



Another lovely war?

DAMNATION ALLEY

Screenplay by Alan Sharp and Lukas Heller

Directed by Jack Smight

Starring Jan-Michael Vincent,

George Peppard, Dominique

Sanda and Paul Winfield

20th Century-Fox, Rated PG

Can a film with killer cockroaches be all bad? Yes, it can. And it can make World War III and attendant nuclear holocaust look like a minor inconvenience.

As a result of a stock-footage Armageddon, the earth gets knocked off its axis and peculiar things happen to the weather. The sky lights up with aurora borealis effects. There are giant scorpions to contend with, the aforementioned killer cockroaches, and a gang of dim-witted troglodytes with designs on Dominique Sanda (on her way to 1900).

A little band of survivors (Jan-Michael Vincent, George Peppard, Paul Winfield and Sanda) unfazed by any of these deterrents, are wending their way to Albany. (Why Albany? Because a dim radio signal emanates from there, indicating that there may be other survivors.) They are driving a recreational vehicle that is 35 feet long and weighs 21,800 pounds and is the best actor in the film.

(The special effects also star, as does a new process—Sound 360—that for the first time makes it possible to experience the thrill of atomic war, which it puts on a planc with *Rollercoaster*.)

Jan-Michael Vincent is probably the last actor in the world who can say "gosh-dang" with any sort of conviction. In a press hand-out provided by 20th Century-Fox, Vincent is quoted as saying that he "will not condone negativity in scripts or in life. For me, it has to be positive." It takes considerable ingenuousness to fail to note the negativity inherent in nuclear war.

Not that optimism among nuclear survivors is objectionable. (It is merely improbable.) What is objectionable is the premise of

this film: i.e., with a little pluck and a little luck, we'll bring this recreational vehicle into Albany on a wing and a prayer—to hell with radiation and killer cockroaches! All that's required is a little Yankee ingenuity.

Damnation Alley makes you think, "Gee, World War III doesn't look so terrible." Vincent's hair is always carefully blow-dried; Sanda appears in an oriental peignoir that looks as though she picked it up yesterday at Saks; there's plenty of booze and cigarettes and copies of *Playboy* magazine. (And this is all supposed to take place years after the war, when supplies,

however ample, might be assumed to have given out.) And above all, those aurora borealis effects are kinda pretty.

Vincent, Sanda and Peppard do get to Albany, of course, and the scene they find there is as tranquil as the set of *Ozzie and Harriet*. It's all too upbeat. Almost giddy.

It's pointless to go on itemizing the offenses of this silly movie. Director Jack Smight (*Airport 1975*) couldn't have saved it if Helen Hayes had played one of the scorpions. —Barry Brennan
Barry Brennan is a film critic who writes regularly for the Santa Monica Evening Outlook.

Records

Sakolsky's Top Ten Jazz Records of 1977

New Releases

Ornette Coleman. *Dancing in Your Head*. (Horizon A&M, SP 722). Harmelodic magic.

Sam Rivers and Dave Holland. *Sam Rivers/Dave Holland, Vol. 2*. (Improvising Artists, Inc. IAI 373.848). The gospel of Sam and Dave according to Paul (Bley, that is).

Various Artists. *Wildflowers 1: NYC Loft Jazz Sessions*. (Douglas NBIP 7045). Studio Rivbea, circa 1976, including a rare live recording of AIR (with Henry Threadgill, Steve McCall and Fred Hopkins).

Julius Hemphill. *Blue Boye*. (Mbari MPC 1000X—2-record set). An ambitious solo album and an instant "roots" classic. Dexter Gordon. *Homecoming*. (Columbia PG 3465W—2-record set). Not the best Dexter on wax (see *Go*, Blue Note 84112 for that), but an historic album—welcome back!

Reissues/Previously Unissued

Charlie Parker/Lester Young, et al. *Jazz at the Philharmonic: Bird and Pres' 46 Concerts*. (Verve VE 2-2518—2-record set). First there was Bean, then Pres and then Bird—hear all three on this fine set—thank you, Norman.

John Coltrane. *The Other Village Vanguard Tapes*. (Impulse AS 9325—2-record set). Trane + Dolphy = Untitled Originals.

John Coltrane. *Afro Blue/Impressions*. (Pablo 2620 101—2-record set). "The" quartet of the '60s, live in Europe—"I Want to Talk About You" offers us Trane in one of his most searching outings.

Joseph Jarman. *Song Ford*. (Delmark DS-410). Great black music, featuring a rare studio date by AACM guru Fred Anderson.

Various Artists. *Jazz Women: A Feminist Retrospective*. (Stash ST 109—2-record set). The "jazzman" is a woman—guitarist Mary Osborne says it all on "I Can Do Anything Better Than You Can."

Ron Sakolsky reviews jazz regularly for *IN THESE TIMES*.

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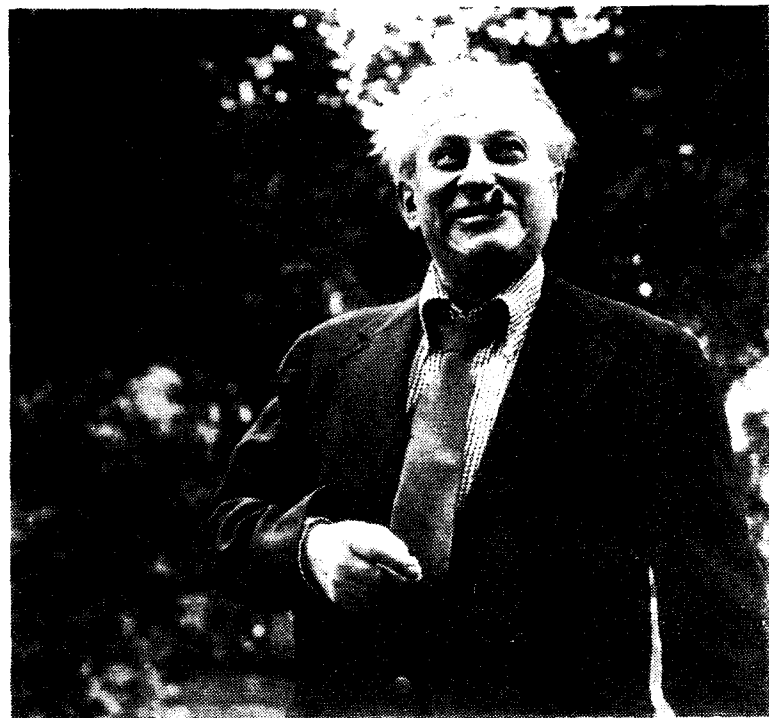
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Photos by Ken Firestone

Do-It-Yourself Messiah

Chicago is where the action is for those who want to sing Handel's oratorio, *The Messiah*, instead of listening to other people do it. And there were enough of them to fill Orchestra Hall (home of Solti's Chicago Symphony) to the uppermost galleries on the night of Dec. 14.

On the podium was Margaret Hillis, who conducted last year's inaugural Do-It-Yourself *Messiah* and who became front-page news last month when she substituted for Solti at the last moment in a New York performance of Mahler's choral symphony. Greeting the 2,500 participants Wednesday night, Hillis said, "I hope you have all had as challenging a year as I have since we were last together here. But believe me, Mahler's Eighth was nothing compared to this."

The stage behind her was filled with a volunteer orchestra, full strength, with all the required trumpets, a violin section that included gray-haired veterans and one youngster who never played out of the first position, a professional harpsichordist and seven double basses. They had never rehearsed together until Hillis took them on three hours before concert time.

By then there was such a press of ticket-holders (tickets were free but had to be obtained by writing

in), that ushers gave up trying to check on the other entrance requirement—that one bring one's own score. The huge auditorium was divided roughly into sections, and the crowd arranged itself more or less accordingly.

Hillis asked for a showing of hands on those who had not attended last year's performance. When a majority of hands went up, she proposed a "rehearsal." "Just remember that sound travels slowly," she said. "Watch the baton; don't wait till you hear your entrance—especially you way up there at the top. By the time you hear it, you'll be three beats late."

With that, she plunged into the first chorus, which everyone present seemed to know. After that it was, "Take it from the top."

Four professional soloists, all of whom had sung in the 1976 concert, were there in formal attire, as was Hillis and most of the orchestra. For the rest of the audience, anything went—in costume and/or competence. There were moments when things got so ragged that Hillis stopped and tried again. It was, as she announced at the start, not so much a performance as a celebration.

The notion of a community celebration of *The Messiah* at Christmas time is not original with businessman Al Booth, who

is responsible for the Chicago happening: Booth lived for years in London and attended the annual sing-along in Albert Hall. What is unique to Chicago is that there is no entrance fee. "They've done it in New York for years," Booth says, "but they charge \$5 or \$6. Our idea was to let anyone—everyone—who cares about this music come and participate."

Everyone who cares about this music turns out to be an extraordinary cross-section of the community—every age, national origin, economic, social and educational background, every religious persuasion or lack of one. There is probably no other major musical work that could draw so heterogeneous a following—and not only for a one-shot at Orchestra Hall, but for four other celebrations in the Chicago area.

Two days later, Hillis conducted a Do-It-Yourself *Messiah* in Elgin, Ill., with that city's symphony orchestra. There was another in near-by Peoria under the sponsorship of the Illinois Bach society. A chamber choir and a community church in Chicago's northern suburbs opened their doors to all comers, with soloists, orchestral, organ and harpsichord accompaniment, to sing all or at least most of Handel's much-handled but still exhilarating *Messiah*.



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BOOKS

Straight talk about Italian Communism

THE ITALIAN ROAD TO SOCIALISM

An interview by Eric Hobsbawm with Giorgio Napolitano
Lawrence Hill (Westport, Ct.),
\$3.95 paper, \$6.50 cloth

The Italian Communist party was launched in 1921. In the following year the fascists staged their "march on Rome" and Mussolini was installed as premier. From 1922 until the end of World War II in 1945, the CP struggled to overthrow the fascist regime.

In its infancy, the party was compelled to grapple with very mature questions. Why did the Italian working class suffer such a catastrophic defeat? Why did fascism triumph? These questions reflected a painful experience: i.e., a profound crisis does not necessarily presage socialist revolution; it can also lead to the victory of fascism. On a global scale this lesson made its most traumatic impact with Hitler's conquest in 1933, but the Italians had a ten-year headstart.

One cannot begin to comprehend Italian communism without taking these and other historic factors into account. The first merit of Hobsbawm's interview with Napolitano (a member of the Italian CP's Secretariat) is its elucidation of the historic background and experience that helped make Italian communism what it is. Companion merits are the pertinent elaborations of the contemporary Italian and world contexts, of certain internal dynamics in the Italian CP's development, and of key Gramscian concepts that inform the party's theory and practice. Finally, there is the specific examination of the party's program and tactics.

The sum of all this is the most lucid and most competent exposition available of what Italian communism is all about. Because Hobsbawm is so keen and know-

ledgeable, and because Napolitano does not dispense official pronouncements and is not oracular or pompous, the interview acquires the flavor of a free exchange between peers.

The crux of the discussion is contained in Napolitano's declaration that "the fundamental task before us (in Italy and Western Europe generally) is to affirm working class hegemony through the democratic process." In the expansion upon this theme, there are some significant emphases.

With respect to the democratic process, for example, the recurrent emphasis is upon the direct, active participation of the many millions. This is not only a matter of desire or intention. Napolitano cites striking instances in which Italian Communists have acted as effective champions of grassroots democracy.

He refers more than once to Gramsci's injunction that a class aspiring to hegemony must be capable of sacrificing crude or narrow economic interests to reach a "certain equilibrium in compromise" with the social groups it proposes to lead. Preoccupation with narrow group interests contradicts Gramsci's conception of hegemony in which the working class is first convinced and then persuades other subordinate social groups that it possesses not only the economic and political competence, but also the cultural and moral authority to assume leadership of society.

In political practice this idea of sacrifice is not easily implemented. Discussion of the difficulties is broadened to encompass the overall issue of tensions and conflicts within any alliance that includes a variety of groups and interests, and it ranges from the Chilean experience, to Lenin's New Economic Policy, to present day Italian politics.

Even more complex, perhaps,



Antonio Gramsci, Marxist theoretician, as a young man.

is another policy flowing from the conception of hegemony. Dominating Italian politics is the recognition of a profound crisis—economic, social, political, a crisis of hegemony. In confronting this crisis, Napolitano argues, it is not enough for the working class movement to limit itself to denunciations of capitalism and its masters, or to actions purely in defense of the workers' economic interests. It must offer a program for resolving the crisis in terms that correspond to political realities. One of these realities is that neither the left alone,

nor any other single political force, can resolve the crisis. This, in essence, is the problem addressed in the "historic compromise" proposed by the Italian CP.

Many more specific topics are covered. The world communist movement. Internationalism. Attitudes toward the Soviet Union. The nature of the crisis of contemporary capitalism. The relationship between the Italian CP's program for structural reform and the transition to socialism. It is not possible here to summarize "positions" on even the most important of the topics. What is

suggested, however, is the comprehensiveness of the interview and its methodology.

We are not given a series of dicta. We are offered a critical examination of complex problems as they are confronted and perceived and responded to in action by one of the very few contemporary organizations that is a significant political and ideological force, not only in its own country, but in the global arena.

—Al Richmond
Al Richmond is, among other things, the author of *A Long View from the Left*.

Why poor people's movements fail as they succeed

They win through movements, not organizations.

POOR PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS: Why They Succeed, How They Fail

By Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward
Pantheon, 1977, \$12.95

Piven and Cloward have written a very important book, which calls out for discussion and debate. Their thesis is deceptively simple: poor people gain when they engage in the politics of disruption; lose when they focus on organization building, lobbying and electoral politics. In short, poor people win through movements, not organizations.

The authors bolster their argument with an analysis of two poor people's movements from

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the 1930s and two from the 1960s. Common elements can be identified in all cases.

As economic and social crises mount, poor people go through a transitional period where they stop blaming themselves for their condition and come, more and more, to see the system as the problem. (e.g., before the New Deal, with "welfare" mostly a private matter and economic conditions at their worst, an "unemployed workers' movement" began. "As indignation mounted... some people not only defied the prohibition against going on the dole, but some even began to defy the apparatus of ritualized humiliation that had made that prohibition so effective." Soon, large numbers of people with relatively loose organization came together "in sporadic street demonstrations, in rent riots, and in the disruption of relief centers.")

The revolt spreads quickly, and the first line of state defense (local sources of revenue) soon become exhausted. This forces local

officials, including big city mayors and business leaders, to lobby in Washington for federal aid and for progressive changes in the welfare law. These officials become, in effect, poor people's lobbyists.

If, however, poor people's groups themselves shift to organization building and lobbying, they lose their direct action focus, are coopted and doomed to failure. That is the lesson Piven and Cloward draw from the history of the Workers' Alliance during the Depression and the National Welfare Rights Organization of the '60s. On the former, they state: "That leadership failed to understand that government does not need to meet the demands of an organized vanguard in order to assuage mass unrest, although it does have to deal with the unrest itself." As for the NWRO, as it "gradually became enmeshed in a web of relationships with governmental officials and private groups, it was transformed from a protest organiza-

tion to a negotiating and lobbying organization... The political beliefs of those in the leadership stratum became more conventional, the militancy of the tactics they advocated weakened, and the presumed goal of membership expansion receded."

Finally, the hierarchical, representative nature of the organization removes poor people from its day to day activities. They lose their activism and with it a sense of themselves as powerful.

Although Piven and Cloward take a critical stance toward these movements, they give them their due. Both have played a role in the history they recount, and theirs is a criticism filled with understanding and passion. Certainly the movements have helped raise the living standards of the poor and eliminated much of the daily terror black people have faced. But more *could* have been done. The need to seize the right time to press the issue cannot be underestimated. As "periods of profound social dislocations are

infrequent, so too are opportunities for protest among the lower classes."

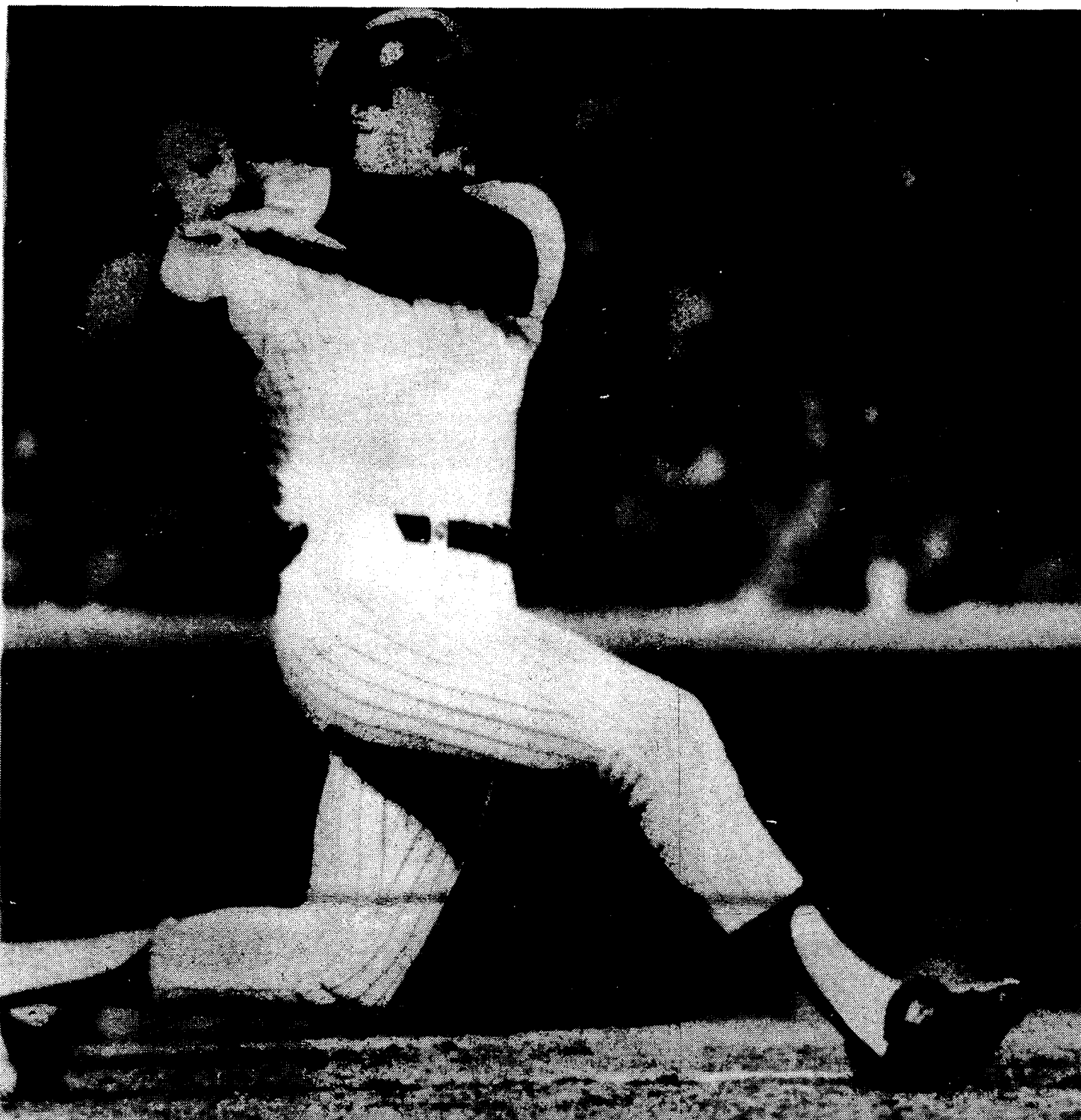
Piven and Cloward's critique of organizations includes unstated anarchist analysis, and the tactics they describe as successful might well be considered anarchist actions.

While disruption may work in the short run, can organization be dispensed with over the long haul? The authors do not deal with long term strategies, but they might answer that for the poor, long term planning is a luxury they can ill afford.

Another issue remains: the possibility of alliance between the non-working poor and the working poor. Scapegoating of the first group for the votes of the second has always been a dishonorable American political tradition. Bringing these groups together, while at the same fighting anti-poor politicians and legislation, is an honorable goal in need of a strategy.

—Maynard Seider

Free-for-all agents



Reggie Jackson's '77 season serves as a microcosm for the success of the draft. The big winner last year, he had an erratic season, but saved the day in the World Series.

By Barry Codell
Changes in baseball's salary structure gained a new foothold this month as the diamond's second annual free-agent player auction neared completion.

Twenty-seven year old Lyman Bostock, who has spent two and a half seasons with the Minnesota Twins, walked away from the grab-bag humming his new owner's favorite tune, "Santa Claus is coming to town." Bostock's \$3 million windfall came from the old cowboy and Christmas crooner, Gene Autry; in baseball circles, owner of the California Angels.

Lyman Jr., a line-drive hitting lead-off man who had a .334 average in 1977, reportedly rejected an even higher offer from the New York Yankees.

Bostock's father, Lyman Sr., toiled for the New York Cubans, Ethiopian Clowns and the Birmingham Black Barons in the early 1940s as a player in the Negro National League. Bostock senior's salary was reputed to be approximately \$4,000.

"I know the President of the United States makes \$200,000 a year. We all have our jobs," said Bostock. "Evidently more people support sports than the President. Singers and dancers make big money, too. An Elton John makes \$7 million a year."

Angel president Buzzie Bavasi was pleased about the decision to sign Bostock, whose salary while playing for the Twins was only \$30,000. "If Jimmy Carter could hit .336 he would make more, too. We live by the Golden Rule. He who has the gold makes the rules." Bavasi said nothing regarding the Angels' recent economy wave that resulted in the firing of secretaries and scouts.

(Last year Autry okayed the spending of \$5.2 million to corral three players: Joe Rudi, Bobby Grich, and Don Baylor. Rudi and Grich, however, spent most of

the season on the sidelines due to injuries. Baylor, under intense pressure from fans to justify his salary, slumped most of the year and at season's end, asked to be traded, claiming he was misused.)

Last year no aberration.

Bostock's teammate Larry Hise also found riches in the latest draft, signing with Milwaukee. Other new signers include former White Sox outfielders Oscar Gamble and Richie Zisk, San Diego and Texas, respectively; pitcher Doc Medich, Texas; relievers Rich Gossage and Rawley Eastwick, Yankees; and slugger Dave Kingman, Cubs.

Pundits who saw the 1976 free-agent bidding as a one-shot aberration were befuddled as this year's free-agents again were offered millions of dollars in exchange for autographs decorating multi-year contracts.

During the past season owners, fearing that last winter's offers had brought most of them closer to bankruptcy than a championship, had talked a lot about sobriety and restraint. Owners such as the White Sox' Bill Veeck and Philadelphia's Ruly Carpenter prophesied that the desirability of players selling themselves on the open market would be confined to their imagination.

Yet, by the end of the draft, all of the first-stringers among the free-agents had signed lucrative long-term contracts.

Carpenter lamented, "This time they [the owners] are wilder than ever. Last year, 24 players received an estimated \$24 million! And when my players see what inferior players are getting, they'll march in here with outstretched palms." He said the Phillies have a payroll of over \$4 million already, and though they set a team record of 2.7 million fans, they lost

"If Jimmy Carter could hit .336 he would make more too."

a "significant sum of money."

Nonetheless, the new system now seems entrenched. A player now has the right to move where the Astro-turf is greener.

Killing the reserve clause.

The change has not come easily. Until recently the team had absolute control of its players' services, including the right to sell or trade.

These rights were embodied in the reserve clause, which provided that management had the right to renew a player's contract if he refused to sign a new one. (It was also entitled to cut his salary 20 percent upon renewal.) In this way players were coerced into signing unfair contracts.

The reserve clause was challenged in the '20s and in 1922 Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes upheld its legality. Holmes ruled that baseball as an institution was not required to answer to anti-trust laws (the basis of the challenge).

In 1969 star St. Louis outfielder Curt Flood refused to report to Philadelphia after a six-player trade had transferred his contract to the Phils. He insisted he was "not a piece of property to be bought or sold irrespective of my wishes."

Flood sat out the following year while his case was pleaded unsuccessfully in U.S. District Court. He made a comeback attempt in 1971, but, citing physical and emotional strain, he soon retired.

In 1972 the Supreme Court ruled 5-3 against Flood, but, significantly, urged modification of baseball's anti-trust exemption through congressional legislation.

After the players' strike, owners accepted the idea of negotiating the standard player's contract, and binding arbitration of players' salaries became a reality in 1974. Flood's efforts had played a big part in pushing the 100-year-old national game into modern labor practices.

The reserve clause itself was dealt an historic blow in 1975. Arbitrator Peter Seitz ruled that pitcher Andy Messersmith's contract had been illegally renewed after he failed to agree on a salary with the California Angels. Seitz declared Messersmith a free agent, free to offer his services to any major league club.

Seitz, who had shaken the establishment a year earlier when he declared Jim "Catfish" Hunter a free agent due to a contract "technicality," was thereupon fired by baseball. His Messersmith verdict, however, was not overturned by the courts.

(Messersmith, ironically, was recently sold to the Yankees for \$100,000 by the Atlanta Braves, who had signed him to a \$3 million contract in 1975. Brave owner Ted Turner declared, "I want to go with the less-established, hungrier players." The deal was made pending approval by Messersmith, who confided, "I only want to play for a winner.")

The first free-for-all.

After the Messersmith ruling, players began to play out the final year of their contracts without signing—"playing out their options"—to see if better opportunity existed for them with other teams. These free agents were pooled and selected in a

Continued on page 20.